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Manning breaks NFL record for TD passes in season

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Indianapolis Colts QB Peyton Manning

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TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2004

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Tsunamis' deadly toll assessed across Asia

Fatalities exceed 22,000 in nine countries Pages 11-13

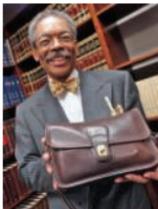


Right: Relatives of people who were killed in the tsunami mourn Monday at a hospital in Nagappattinam, in southern India. Above left: Sri Lankan armed forces personnel guard an area destroyed by the tsunami from looters in downtown Galle, southern Sri Lanka, on Monday. Above right: A man talks on his phone Monday near smashed cars along Patong Beach, in Phuket, Thailand. Rescue teams converged Monday on beaches and remote islands in search of the missing.

AP photos



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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

Nation

Methodist defrocking: A Methodist minister who was defrocked for declaring that she's a lesbian living with her partner is taking her case to a church appeals court.

The Rev. Irene Elizabeth Stroud, of Philadelphia, was ousted Dec. 2 for violating the United Methodist Church's law against "self-avowed practicing homosexuals" in the clergy.

She decided last week to appeal but delayed the announcement until after Christmas weekend. Notice of appeal must be filed this week.

She said one factor in her decision was something retired Bishop Joseph Yeakey, the judge who presided at her church trial, said to her after the verdict. Yeakey told Stroud, "The day will come when the church apologizes for this decision."

World

China and Taiwan: China lashed out at Japan on Monday for allowing former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to visit the country despite threats from Beijing that it could damage ties between the Asian rivals.

China sees Lee, who arrived in central Japan's Nagoya city Monday for a weeklong visit, as a symbol of Taiwan's independence movement.

Lee, 81, made no remarks on his arrival, but waved to a cheering crowd of more than 200 Taiwanese living here. He plans to visit a hot springs resort and the ancient capital of Kyoto, where he attended university in 1943 when Taiwan was a Japanese colony.

China swiftly issued a statement expressing "strong dissatisfaction."

Pinochet indictment: Chile's Supreme Court has postponed until after New Year a decision on whether to uphold the indictment and house arrest of Gen. Augusto Pinochet on human rights charges, a judge reported Monday.

Justice Enrique Cury said a ruling will be announced next week, but he did not give a date.

No reasons were given for the postponement, but two justices of the five-member panel are on vacation for the last week of the year.

Pinochet, 89, remained at his suburban Santiago, Chile, mansion Monday recovering from a stroke he suffered Dec. 18, and that forced his hospitalization for five days. Prosecution lawyers insisted that while Pinochet has health problems, he is mentally fit to face trial.

Suspected Moroccan terrorists: A Madrid judge has charged three Moroccans with belonging to a radical cell that was planning to buy explosives for a terrorist attack in Spain or Morocco, a court official said Monday.

Investigating magistrate Fernando Andreu charged Majid Bakkali, Mohamed Douha and Mustafa Farhaoui with being members of a terrorist group and conspiracy to buy explosives. Bakkali and Douha were arrested in northeastern Spain on Dec. 22. Farhaoui was picked up three days later.

The charges are provisional and stop short of a formal indictment, but suggest the court has strong evidence against them men. An-



Middle East peace: Palestinian men wave as they and others are greeted by friends and relatives Monday after being released by Israeli authorities at the Tarkumiyeh checkpoint near the West Bank town of Hebron. Israel released 159 Palestinian prisoners Monday, most of them with only months or weeks left of their sentences, in what Israel called a "gesture to the new Palestinian leadership." Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said he would seek final Cabinet approval to his Gaza Strip withdrawal plan by February, months ahead of schedule, officials said. Lawmakers also quoted Sharon as saying Israel will use harsh force if Palestinian militants try to disrupt the pullout.

other Moroccan who was detained with the pair, was freed. The Interior Ministry said police began watching the group in September when they made contact with a suspected intermediary in an unspecified central European country to buy explosives.

Murk theft: Police questioned a suspect for the first time in the bold robbery of two Edward Munch masterpieces, but declined to say Thursday how close they might be to finding the missing paintings.

"The Scream" and "Madonna" were stolen in a brazen daylight raid from an Oslo museum on Aug. 22 by three masked robbers. There has been no sign of the paintings, although Norwegian media have reported that one painting, "Madonna," may have been seriously damaged.

Oslo Assistant Police Chief Iver Stensrud confirmed that a man was brought in for questioning Wednesday in connection with the theft. The man, whose name was withheld, was released but was still considered to be a suspect, Stensrud said. The suspect's lawyer, Sverre Naess, said his client has an alibi for the time of the theft.

Naess said police had questioned his client about a car used in the robbery and later found abandoned.

Philippines' Estrada: Former Philippine President Joseph Estrada arrived in Hong Kong on Monday for knee surgery, and he promised that he would return to his country to face corruption charges.

Estrada looked relaxed in a denim jacket, jeans and sunglasses as he made his first visit overseas since being ousted amid massive anti-corruption protests in 2001. He has been under virtual house arrest at his holiday home east of Manila.

The 67-year-old former film star told re-

porters at Hong Kong's airport that he wouldn't try to abscond. An anti-graft court allowed Estrada to leave for the surgery after he posted a \$17,800 bond, and formally pledged to return.

Imperial succession in Japan: Japan will set up a task force to consider allowing a reigning empress, an official said Monday — the government's first review of a post-World War II law that limits imperial succession to men.

Japanese law bans women from ascending to the Chrysanthemum Throne. But no boy has been born to the Japanese royal family since the 1960s, and government officials have been fretting about how to solve the royals' most serious succession crisis in centuries.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hosoda said a 10-member task force comprised of former government officials, legal experts and scholars would begin meeting in January to examine legal revisions. They will compile a recommendation for the government by late 2005.

Taliban attack in Afghanistan: Suspected Taliban forces set off explosions as American military convoys rumbled down two roads in southern and eastern Afghanistan, injuring one Marine and damaging a vehicle, officials said Monday.

The first attack occurred Friday in eastern Kunar province, said Maj. Mark McCann, an army spokesman. Some 40 rebels set off a roadside bomb, then opened fire on the convoy, injuring the Marine.

His name was not disclosed, but McCann said his injuries were not life-threatening.

Fighting between Taliban rebels and Afghan forces left at least four people dead last week, while 17 rebels were captured.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

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USAREUR stressing winter road awareness

"Be Safe" program aims to keep drivers aware of safety hazards

BY JESSICA INIGO
Stars and Stripes

HEIDELBERG, Germany — Now is the time for drivers to start taking it easy.

The U.S. Army Europe and Installation Management Agency-Europe are teaming up to provide comprehensive driving tips with a Winter Safety Campaign, which runs through April.

With the Army's "Be Safe" campaign as its muscle, military officials are urging drivers to ease up on the gas, use the brake and prepare for roadside hazards throughout the winter.

"The intent of this campaign is to save lives by implementing a combination of new and proven risk management techniques ...," reads a note on the USAREUR home page.

Maureen Pikal, the acting IMA-E safety officer, based in Heidelberg, said drivers should use the following tips this winter:

- Always let someone know where you're going and which route you will be taking.
- Install good winter tires with snow chains when necessary.
- Get your vehicle winterized by adding antifreeze and winter-grade oil.
- Plan long trips carefully by checking weather, listen-



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

One way to navigate the roads safely during the winter is to have the windshields and windows clear of ice and snow. In Germany, it is the law. Also, snow must be cleared from the hood and roof of your car before driving.

ing to travel advisories and resting every two hours while on the road.

■ Carry food, water, blankets, and an emergency car kit with a windshield scraper and small broom for ice and snow removal.

Pikal said that the leading cause of off-duty deaths is transportation accidents.

There were 131 privately owned vehicle fatalities Army-wide in fiscal year 2003, with 130 of those deaths occurring during off-duty hours, according to officials at the

U.S. Army Safety Center, headquartered at Fort Rucker, Ala.

In Germany, where many USAREUR soldiers are stationed, more than 5,000 people died on city roads last winter. More than 7,700 people died on small highway roads off the autobahn, while nearly 1,000 people died while driving on the autobahn, according to statistics on the German driving agency ADAC Wed site.

Preparing a vehicle for winter and knowing how to react if stranded or lost on the road are the keys to safer winter driving, Pikal said.

"The biggest thing is to just slow down," she said, reminding winter drivers to maintain six to eight seconds of driving time between vehicles while on the road.

Also, Pikal said ice forms in many areas along highways and bridges, causing vehicles to skid. She warns drivers not to slam on the brakes, but instead ease off the accelerator and steer into the direction of the skid.

Studies show that many accidents seem to happen directly after troops return from deployments, she said, which is why winter driving tips are now part of the reintegration process.

Pikal said two new driving classes may be coming to Europe soon to stress the fact that "driving is a life skill." An aggressive-driving class will be classroom-based and given to people who have caused accidents. An advanced driving skills course, taught outdoors, will focus on improving driving skills.

For more information and tips on winter driving, visit the USAREUR Web page at www.hqsareur.army.mil and the IMA-E Web page at www.ima.army.mil/europe/index.asp.

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LARRY REILLY/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Friends and family catch their first glimpse of returning 1st Infantry Division's Division Support Command and 701st Main Support Battalion soldiers this month in the reception tent at Harvey Barracks in Kitzingen, Germany, on Dec. 23. The BSB spent \$1.8 million to lease these nine "reintegration tents" for division homecoming events from Iraq this spring.

Kitzingen buys tents to host flood of 1st ID homecomings

BY STEVE LIEWER
Stars and Stripes

KITZINGEN, Germany — The 417th Base Support Battalion has spent nearly \$2 million on a welcome-home present for the soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division's headquarters and support staff based in Würzburg and nearby Kitzingen.

It has leased nine aluminum-sided portable buildings for use as reception and reintegration centers at Leighton, Harvey and Larson barracks in the two communities.

Capt. Larry Wright Jr., the BSB's plans and operations officer, said the heated buildings will fill in for gyms, hangars and meeting rooms during the division's busy

homecoming from Iraq, which is expected to peak in February.

That will free up those rooms for use by the rest of the community, Wright said.

Thousands of family members will greet returning soldiers for the first time in the three reception centers, one of which has been built at each base. Wright said each contains 500-seat bleachers, office space, a children's play area and a movie room.

The large buildings are divided by curtains, so spouses and children can wait on one side while troops fill out paperwork and turn in weapons on the other. Then the returning soldiers line up, and the curtains are pulled back to dramatically reveal them standing at attention, Wright said.

The six reintegration buildings are being erected in a motor pool on Leighton Barracks and should be completed by this week.

Soldiers will attend seven half-days of mandatory reintegration training in the new tents before heading off on 30 days of block leave, Wright said.

"In January and February, when we have the big rush, we'll have different units in every tent," he said.

Wright said 417th BSB leaders decided to rent the tents after observing the 1st Armored Division's homecoming at Baumholder from Iraq last summer.

"They were using gyms and other facilities," of different sizes and shapes, he said.

"It was just felt that it was better to have standardized facilities."

The support battalion spent \$1.8 million from a special fund dedicated for expenses related to the war on terrorism to rent the tents until late spring, Wright said. If the tents work well they may be purchased for permanent use.

The tents got their first test Dec. 18 when the first 53 soldiers from the Division Support Command returned to Harvey with the 1st ID's advance party.

"I thought they worked well," said Maj. Christopher Chun, the support command's rear-detachment commander. "Once they get a larger number of soldiers [coming home], that'll be the real test."

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Discount extended

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service is ringing in the New Year with a reprieve on higher prices on phone cards.

AAFES will extend until Feb. 14, Valentine's Day, its discount rate on prepaid phone cards for U.S. military personnel deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, the exchange service announced last week. The special rate had been scheduled to end Jan. 5.

While some rate structures for prepaid phone cards come with murky, AAFES says its cards are priced at the lowest possible rates. Cards purchased in the United States, for example, are intended for domestic use, so rates to places such as Iraq can run as high as 50 cents a minute, Army Maj. Gen. Kathy Frost, the AAFES commander, said in a news release.

The Military Exchange Global Prepaid Phone cards come with either 200 or 550 units. Phone rates are by calls made to the States from Iraq or Afghanistan. A 550-unit card purchased downrange for \$35 (elsewhere the price is \$39) gives the user 185 minutes of conversation at a rate of 19 cents per minute. The regular rate offered 140 minutes at 25 cents a minute. The discounted 200-unit card provides 66 minutes of chat time at a rate of 22.5 cents a minute. The regular rate is 50 minutes at a rate of 30 cents a minute.

DECA customer survey

A worldwide Defense Community Agency survey taken this past autumn registered customer satisfaction at an "all-time high," according to the agency.

DECA surveyed 21,000 customers in September and October, asking them to grade their local facility on 14 areas ranging from prices and products to store layout and overall service, the agency noted in a news release. All 275 commissaries took part in the annual survey.

In the news release, DECA said the survey found customer satisfaction at "an all-time high," citing the previous year's results. In all, the scores topped the marks for 2003.

The agency said it scored highest for having "courteous, friendly and helpful employees." As was the case last year, the lowest mark was for "well-stocked, full shelves."

Vets cemetery repairs

HONOLULU — An extra \$750,000 is needed over the next two years to fix deteriorating conditions at the Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery in Kaneohe, according to a state official.

The money is needed to prevent grave sites from sinking, fix cracking structures and repair the sprinkler system, said Office of Veterans Services Director Edward Cruickshank.

With the Hawaii National Guard and Reserve's soldiers activated for duty in Afghanistan and Iraq, "the harsh reality is that some will not be coming home alive," Cruickshank said. "We owe it to them and their loved ones to provide a resting place, that honors those who gave their lives protecting us."

From staff and wire reports



PHOTOS BY RICK EMERT/Stars and Stripes

Alex Keeton, 12, lifts dumbbells above and bench-presses free weights at left while his father, Staff Sgt. David Thomas, spots him and mother Ruby Thomas watches Wednesday in Bamberg, Germany. A new Warner Barracks program allows children 12 to 16 to be certified through Child and Youth Services to use the gym without a parent present, but the Thomases still make it a family affair.

Class gives kids key to fitness

Bamberg agency offers young teens ability to use gyms with parent

BY RICK EMERT
Stars and Stripes

BAMBERG, Germany — The 279th Base Support Battalion's Child and Youth Services has found a way to get children off the couch after school and into a fitness routine.

A gym certification class that began in November allows youth ages 12 to 16 to use the gym without having a parent present, said Kathy McGill, a CYS instructor for the course. Prior to the class being offered, no child younger than 16 could use the gym without a parent present.

"We offer these classes to give kids the chance to use weight training and cardio training to better themselves fitness-wise," McGill said. "Kids who are not signed up in organized sports can come to the gym instead of being couch potatoes."

The class covers everything from safety and gym etiquette to proper weight-lifting techniques and a beginner's workout regimen.

At least one parent must attend

To get certified

Starting in January, the 279th Base Support Battalion's gym certification class will be offered at 5 p.m. every first and third Thursday of the month. Preregistration is not required. Children and a parent should just show up at the JFK Gym on Warner Barracks in Bamberg, Germany.

The 98th Area Support Group, which includes the 279th BSB, is considering expanding the program to other communities.

the one-hour, one-time class with the child. Although there have been no problems since the program began, McGill said any one who has been certified must follow the rules of the gym. Failing to do so can lead to a suspension of gym privileges, she said.

Once they have taken the course, the kids can use anything in the gym but the sauna. They must sign in and wear a special ID tag attached to the laces on one of their shoes to let the gym staff know that they are certified to use the gym without a parent present, McGill said.

During the class, Sgt. Maj. Re-

naldo Waterman, a certified master fitness trainer from the 7th Corps Support Group, shows the teens and preteens how to properly lift weights without causing injury and also provides a routine they can start with.

"What I do is make sure they have a plan, that they know what they want to achieve by coming to the gym," Waterman said, adding that most of the dozen kids who have taken the class since it began were interested in weight training. "They want to look good," he said.

While Waterman advises the young fitness buffs to avoid free weights, Alex Keeton, 12, has free

weights at home and that's what he prefers to use at the gym, he said. He went through the first certification class offered in November.

"I use [the weight machines] for my legs, but mostly I lift free weights," Alex said. "The class was great, because it teaches you how to not strain yourself when you're working out."

Alex's mother, Ruby Thomas, said the change in policy has allowed her family to spend some quality time together.

"I can understand the policy of not allowing younger kids in the gym, but I'm glad this class is available now," Thomas said. "Alex is already proficient at weight lifting. Now he can come with us to the gym and we can all work out together."

Fitness aside, certifying teens to use the gym also helps keep them occupied.

"This is a good program," Waterman said. "It keeps kids off the streets and keeps them from running around out there and maybe getting into trouble."

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Chaplain who landed at Omaha Beach dies

BY JON THURBER
The Los Angeles Times

George Russell Barber, one of the last surviving chaplains from the U.S. landing at Omaha Beach on D-Day in Europe during World War II, has died. He was 90.

Barber died Dec. 14 at Presbyterians Intercommunity Hospital in Whittier, Calif., of causes associated with old age, according to his son, Don Barber.

On June 6, 1944, Allied forces landed in Normandy, and Barber was one of four chaplains at Omaha Beach with the Army's 1st Infantry Division.

U.S. forces encountered the fiercest resistance of any Allied force on D-Day from German gun emplacements on the cliffs overlooking Omaha Beach. According to his son, Bar-

ber spent a bloody and chaotic day ministering to the wounded and dying. Then he dug a foxhole near the cliffs and bedded down for the night.

More than 1,500 soldiers had been killed. Barber spent much of the next few days on European soil recharging the dead for burial and helping to select the site for the U.S. cemetery overlooking Omaha Beach, his son said.

Barber continued on with his combat ministry through much of the fiercest fighting in Europe, including the Battle of the Bulge and the collapse of the strategic bridge at Remagen.

Barber was born in Buckhead, Ga., on Aug. 26, 1914. He grew up in Atlanta and attended what was then the Cincinnati Bible College. He graduated in 1936 and married Helen Koester of Cincinnati. Shortly after, the couple moved to California, where he found a job

as minister at the Park Avenue Christian Church in Montebello.

Barber left his civilian ministry and joined the horse cavalry in 1941. He was stationed with the cavalry on the U.S.-Mexico border on Dec. 7, 1941, when Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor thrust the country into the war.

In explaining his role as a chaplain, Barber once told a wire service publication that he "... was there as a man of God, to lead men closer to God and to help with morale and families and loved ones, and to face up to the fact that they are called upon to kill people. War is one of those necessary evils in a world where nations are led by evil men like Hitler and Mussolini."

In addition to his son Don, of Whittier, he is survived by another son, George Russell Barber of Macon, Ga., four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Assassination attempt kills 15 in Baghdad

Sunni Muslim party pulls out of Iraq election

BY SLOBODAN LEKIC

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — In a double blow to plans for a Jan. 30 parliamentary election, a suicide car bomb aimed at the head of Iraq's strongest Shiite party killed 15 people Monday, and the largest Sunni Muslim political grouping announced its withdrawal from the campaign for the Jan. 30 elections, citing the rapidly deteriorating security situation.

The suicide bomber tried to drive his car into the gate of the residence of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq — the country's most powerful Shiite political party. He detonated his explosives when guards blocked his way.

Fifteen people died and at least 50 were wounded in the explosion, which shook the Jadiriyah district and sent a cloud of smoke high above the area, police Capt. Ahmed Ismail said.

Thirty-two cars on the street were destroyed or damaged. Al-Hakim was not hurt.

Hakim also heads the candidate list of the 228-member United Iraqi Alliance coalition, which is widely expected to dominate the post-election constitutional assembly and play a key role in formulating Iraq's new national charter. The coalition is backed by Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

Just hours later, the leader of the moderate Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party announced that the group had reversed its earlier decision to take part in the elections.

"The security situation keeps going from bad to worse and has to be dealt with," said Mohsen Abdel-Hamid.

The two events underline the difficulty of holding credible national elections — the first free ballot since the overthrow of the monarchy 46 years ago — amid the instability caused by the escalating armed insurrection.

The prospect of attacks and intimidation had led senior Sunni political and religious leaders to call for a postponement of the vote until the insurgency is brought under control.



A guard stands amid rubble in front of the residence of Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, head of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the country's most powerful Shiite political group. A suicide bomber detonated his car at the residence's gate, killing 15 people and injuring dozens, police said. Al-Hakim was unharmed.

The Iraqi Islamic Party said its decision to pull out of the race does not mean that it would not take part in a future ballot.

"The party's desire is to take part in the future, should the requirements for its success be available," it said.

Party Secretary General Tarek al-Hashemi acknowledged that the withdrawal will leave minority Sunnis underrepresented in the assembly, but noted: "We believe when a house is on fire, you should first put out the fire before working on decorating and arranging it."

Shiites comprise about 60 percent of Iraq's population, with Kurds and Sunni Arabs making up 20 percent each. Many in Iraq and abroad fear the legitimacy of the election would be compromised if the Sunni community refrains from voting.

Shiite leaders also have been sharply critical of the U.S.-led response to the insurgency, saying the Iraqis themselves would have been more effective in countering the mainly Sunni rebels.

Political and religious leaders of the Shiite community, who strongly back the holding of next month's vote, have been repeatedly targeted by the mainly Sunni Muslim insurgents since the ouster of Saddam Hussein.

Monday's suicide attack was the second on a leader of the party on the same block in the Jadiriyah district of Baghdad. On Nov. 7, a car bomb exploded near the home of Iraq's finance minister, Adil Abdel-Mahdi. One of his guards died but the minister escaped unharmed.

Speaking after Monday's blast, al-Hakim denounced the interim government's security apparatus, claiming it had been infiltrated by Saddam loyalists.

"We hold the Iraq government responsible for such criminal acts. This government has adopted the same wrong policies that were adopted by the occupation forces

in dealing with security," al-Hakim told Iraq's Al-Furat Television.

The residence, where Hakim has his home and office, was previously the house of Tariq Aziz, the former senior aide to Saddam who has been in prison since April last year.

In August 2003, a suicide bomber killed Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, elder brother of Abdul Aziz and former leader of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Like his late brother, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim is a Shiite cleric who opposed Saddam from exile in Iran before returning to Iraq.

Meanwhile, a U.S. soldier died of wounds Monday and another was injured in a roadside bomb explosion in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, the U.S. military said in a statement.

And in northern Iraq, gunmen shot dead an Iraqi working as translator for the U.S. military, police Brig. Gen. Sarah Qader said. The shooting of Ali Ahmed took place in the town of Tuz, some 105 miles north of Baghdad.

“The security situation keeps going from bad to worse and has to be dealt with.”

Mohsen Abdel-Hamid
leader, Sunni Iraqi Islamic Party

Bin Laden endorses al-Zarqawi as his deputy

The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — In an audiotape broadcast Monday by al-Jazeera satellite television, a man purported to be Osama bin Laden endorsed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi as his deputy in Iraq and called for a boycott of next month's elections there.

The voice on the tape described al-Zarqawi as the "emir" of al-Qaida in Iraq and called upon Muslims there "to listen to him."

Speaking of a statement last month in which al-Zarqawi declared allegiance to bin Laden and changed his group's name to al-Qaida in Iraq, the voice on the tape called it "a great step on the path of uniting all the Muslims in establishing the state of righteousness and ending the state of injustice."

The voice sounded like bin Laden but there was no way to independently confirm who the speaker was.

Al-Jazeera broadcast excerpts of the tape while showing a still photo of the bearded bin Laden, wearing a white robe and head covering.

Al-Zarqawi's group is responsible for numerous car bombings and beheadings of foreign hostages in Iraq.

This was the second tape by bin Laden to surface this month. An audiotape posted on an Islamic Web site Dec. 16 had a man identified as Osama bin Laden praising militants who attacked a U.S. consulate in Saudi Arabia earlier this month and calling on militants to stop the flow of oil to the West.

Bin Laden is believed to be hiding in the mountains along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Sunday, Dec. 26, 2004, at least 1,323 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,034 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is seven higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Thursday.

The British military has reported 75 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,185 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 925 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No new deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

■ No new identifications reported.

Troops call for cooperation in strategic Taji

U.S. asks for local help after sheiks say security in area could make other cities safer

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO

Stars and Stripes

TAJI, Iraq — Local leaders in this mostly rural area on the outskirts of Baghdad are telling U.S. military commanders that security is still the most important issue to be resolved.

Military officials largely agree, and say the fastest fix is to get more cooperation from those same leaders and townspeople in ongoing efforts to root out insurgent fighters.

Last week, several battalion commanders and civil affairs personnel from the 256th Brigade Combat Team who patrol the Taji region sat down with local Iraqi officials at a *khada*, or regional council meeting. Working through the morning, the two groups exchanged thoughts, sought information and worked to find common ground.

"If you point out to me who the bad guys are, I will capture or kill them," Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack, commander of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, told the council members. "We want your input to improve the security picture."

U.S. officials say the Taji area could be particularly important because it lies between Baghdad, Fallujah and Mosul, cities that have become centers of the months-long insurgency. Military leaders say insurgents pushed out in last month's offensive in Fallujah could be training or seeking refuge in the area.

"At the *khada*, local officials echoed these sentiments.

"If you secure this area, you can make Baghdad more and more safe," one of the council members said through an interpreter. Insurgents have already threatened many on the council, he said.

One of the difficulties, the Iraqi leaders said, is that new U.S. units continually rotate through the local area, bringing different



Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack, 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment commander, talks with two local sheiks during a regional council meeting in Taji, Iraq. Local leaders say security is still the most important issue to be resolved.



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH GIORDONO/Stars and Stripes

Above: Staff Sgt. Feliberto Rivera, left, and Sgt. Javish Rosa, both of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, clear buildings in a farm compound near Taji on Christmas Eve. **Right:** Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment ask local residents about a trench found in a palm grove. Soldiers say the trench could have been either a fighting position or a hiding place for a weapons cache.

methods and troops than previous units. One council member said he has met with five different U.S. commanders since June 2003.

Some soldiers have the same complaint, saying they are some-

times only in one area long enough to get to know the local population, then are moved.

"The vast majority of people here are on the edge," Slack, a direct and plain-spoken Long Islander, said in an interview earlier

in his command post. "They aren't sure yet whether working with the coalition is a good thing or bad thing."

Insurgents have warned the local population against cooperating with the U.S. military and

have attacked troops with roadside bombs on several routes throughout the area. In addition, Slack said, criminals have harassed truck drivers and other merchants.

Meeting with local political leaders and sheiks is one of the tactics to find the fighters, who council members claimed were largely foreigners. Another tactic is patrolling the countryside.

On Christmas Eve, a day after the council meeting, the unit sent out several patrols. One, a convoy of armored vehicles riding along one of the many irrigation canals around Taji, stopped in a palm grove near a farm complex.

The soldiers quickly searched the buildings. Then they asked the residents — nearly two dozen women and children and one teenage boy — about the situation. The people in the compound said they had enough gas to run their generator only 30 minutes a day.

Sgt. Javish Rosa, 25, of New York City, said the compound reminded him of Afghanistan, where he served an active-duty tour with the 10th Mountain Division. Rosa surveyed the scene, quietly slipping pieces of candy to the children.

The family offered the soldiers tea, and the troops returned with a box full of presents — stuffed animals, plastic flutes, crayons and other gifts. The encounter ended with smiles all around.

Out in the palm grove, soldiers discovered freshly dug trenches that could be either fighting positions or used to hide recently unearthed weapons caches. Insurgents have been known to bury munitions in outlying areas before digging them up to use in later attacks on U.S. troops, military officials have said.

But Friday, as is often the case, all of the people living nearby said they didn't know how the trenches were used or who dug them.

E-mail Joseph Giordono at: giordonoj@stripes.osd.mil

Goodwill visit brings treatment, toys



LYNNE STEELY/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Maj. Andrew T. Johnson, civil affairs officer with the 18th Military Police Brigade out of Mannheim, Germany, visits with Iraqi children during a joint civil-military medical operation this month at the Shatt al Arab School in Baghdad. Several brigade soldiers handed out school supplies, first-aid kits, hygiene supplies and toys to the students. The children also were given physical examinations and treated for minor ailments.

Syria challenges U.S. to prove alleged terrorism link in Iraq

The Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria — Syria on Monday demanded that the United States produce any evidence that Syria is meddling in Iraq's internal affairs and assisting the insurgency against U.S.-led coalition troops in the country.

The state-owned Tishrin daily said Syria has repeatedly called on U.S. envoys and Iraqi officials to put forth evidence to prove their accusations and said Syria was "still waiting" for proof.

"The U.S. accusations are nil, void and baseless," Tishrin said in the front-page editorial.

Iraqi and U.S. officials, including President Bush, have accused Syria of meddling in Iraq's affairs and aiding the insurgency.

Information Minister Mahdi Dakhilallah said

such accusations were meaningless and were harmful "to the general situation and Syrian-Iraqi relations" in particular.

"The situation is difficult in Iraq. [The American] occupation faces a big problem there and the easiest thing is always to try and export the problem, to try and blame others," he said in an interview with Al-Arabiya satellite station Sunday.

Earlier this month, Iraq's Defense Minister Huzayn Shaalan accused Syria and Iran of supporting an al-Qaida-linked group in Iraq and insurgents linked to Saddam Hussein's former security forces. Later, Iraq Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said Shaalan's report did not reflect his government's policy.

Syria denies the charges and says it is doing all it can to control its long and porous border.

“The U.S. accusations are nil, void and baseless.”

Syria's state-owned Tishrin daily

IN THE STATES



A motorist dodges traffic after parking his truck at right and moving to assist a car that went into a ditch during a snowstorm Sunday on Virginia 10 between Chuckatuck and Smithfield, Va.

Snow, sleet falls along East Coast, causing more delays

BY MARK PRATT
The Associated Press

BOSTON — A storm spread sleet, freezing rain and more than a foot of snow along the Eastern seaboard, knocking out power Monday to thousands in New England, stranding hundreds of motorists along icy highways in the Carolinas and causing airport delays.

At least two traffic deaths were blamed on the weather in North Carolina.

Fourteen inches of snow had fallen in Monday in Virginia and 18 inches fell in eastern Massachusetts as the storm skirted the coast on a northeasterly track. Up to 20 inches of snow was possible in southeastern Massachusetts, the National Weather Service said.

Just over 8 inches fell on the eastern tip of New York's Long Island.

The snow limited Boston's Logan International Airport to a single runway until a second was opened late in the morning. That caused "substantial" flight delays, said Logan spokesman Phil Orlandella. Rhode Island got up to 10 inches and T.F. Green Airport in Warwick had flight delays Monday after shutting down last Sunday night so crews could clear runways.

Among the travelers affected were the New England Patriots, who arrived in Boston by bus early Monday after a seven-hour ride from New Jersey, where they defeated the New York Jets 23-7.

The snow was accompanied by stiff wind, and as many as 22,000 customers lost electrical service. Most of them were back on line by late morning, said NSTar

spokesman John Milton. Scattered outages were reported elsewhere in eastern New England.

The storm's combination of wind, freezing rain and snow hit parts of the Carolinas on Sunday, snapping tree limbs and power lines.

About 2,100 customers were still without electricity Monday in North Carolina, down from a peak of 14,000. More than 16,000 homes and businesses were blacked out Sunday in South Carolina, but that number was down to less than 5,000 Monday morning.

Traffic resumed moving early Monday on Interstate 95 in eastern North Carolina after Sunday's ice and more than six inches of snow slowed cars and trucks to a crawl and made some motorists give up altogether.

Hundreds of travelers spent the night in hotel lobbies and shelters.

U.S. intelligence agencies coping with shortages

BY KATHERINE
PFLEGER SHRADER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. counterterrorism agencies are shopping for talent at job fairs, dangling generous scholarships and luring staff from each other in a race to overcome a shortage of analysts that may only get worse with America's new intelligence overhaul.

The problem existed even before Congress and the White House approved an intelligence restructuring this month that creates positions for people whose skills already are in high demand.

There is no consensus across the nation's 15 intelligence agencies on where staffing needs are the most acute. But few dispute that many more analysts are needed, particularly in the departments and agencies created since Sept. 11, 2001. The nearly two-year-old Homeland Security Department is a prime example.

"If you had a hundred, we'd take them," Pat Hughes, the Homeland Security Department's top intelligence official, said in an interview earlier this year. "We have to look, search, test, assess. You don't just get analysts off a tree... We need people, but we need good people."

To find them, Homeland Security and other agencies are heading to job fairs, often looking near military bases where civil service is part of the culture and people may have security clearances.

They're also trying to snag people from the private sector.

Congress also is offering sweeteners.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, a Republican from Kansas, has created military-style scholarships for the intelligence community. Under the program, undergraduate and graduate students can receive up

to \$50,000 of tuition if they agree to take needed jobs in an intelligence agency for up to three years.

This year, slots for 150 students were divided among the agencies, using \$4 million. Being an analyst is almost an academic profession — part taught, part absorbed, part intuition — that requires weighing volumes of information and boiling it down into reports for policy-makers in the executive branch and Congress.

Among the most classified and most important reports are national intelligence estimates, which draw on information across government and are written by leading analysts at the National Intelligence Council. It was the council that produced the October 2002 estimate on the threat posed by Iraq, with its overblown assessment on weapons stockpiles.

Statistics on precisely how many analysts are needed are hard to come by. Almost universally, agencies say such numbers are classified.

President Bush ordered the CIA in November to double the number of analysts it employs. The agency won't say how that equates to new jobs.

Defense Intelligence Agency spokesman Donald Black said there is more competition to hire analysts since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, especially for people who speak languages such as Arabic that are needed at the CIA, FBI and elsewhere. Security clearances narrow the field even more.

"You don't have a limitless pool to draw from," Black said.

Agencies also hire away analysts from each other. "Sure, there is intense competition within the government," said Homeland Security spokesman Michelle Petrovich. "The pool that we are looking for is probably going to be fairly limited and in high demand."

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Online casino strikes again, buys naughty kids' Christmas gifts

The Associated Press

HOUSTON — An online casino will pay a man \$5,300 for his naughty children's Christmas gifts.

The same casino made headlines buying a cheese sandwich said to bear the Virgin Mary's image and a plate that supposedly came from the Titanic.

The Pasadena, Calif., man said last week that he decided to auction the three Nintendo D-S game systems because his sons, ages 9, 11 and 15, had misbehaved.

The man says his family will use the money to buy a new heating system for his Pasadena church. He spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

GoldenPalace.com has paid about \$108,000 for eBay oddities in just more than a month. Its spokesman says it plans to donate the game systems to a needy Houston family.

Shoppers seek mall sales

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

The Associated Press

Merchants are slashing post-holiday prices even deeper, hoping to squeeze the last bit of sales from a shopping season that many retailers are finding unimpressive.

The nation's malls and stores offered discounts on coats, cashmere sweaters and other items Sunday as Americans en masse returned unwanted and ill-fitting presents and redeemed gift cards.

After struggling with disappointing sales throughout the holiday season, retailers and mall operators like J.C. Penney Co. Inc. and Taubman Centers Inc. reported a pickup in sales this past week, though winter storms in the Midwest stymied shopping in the affected regions. Now, merchants are focusing on the week after Christmas, relying on shoppers to do more buying — and less returning — to meet their modest sales goals.

With gift cards increasingly pop-

ular, plenty of stores including Penney and Target were encouraging consumers in advertising on Sunday to spend them immediately — gift cards are recorded as sales only when they are redeemed.

"The holiday season will be told on how many gift cards get redeemed in the week after Christmas," versus how many will be redeemed in January and February,

said Ellen Tolley, a spokeswoman for the National Retail Federation, which estimated \$17.24 billion worth — or roughly about 8 percent of holiday sales — will be sold in gift cards this season.

The full picture for the holiday shopping season won't be known until Jan. 6, when the nation's retailers are slated to report their December sales figures.



Shoppers in San Francisco head to the nation's malls and stores Sunday to grab post-holiday bargains.

Church closes as Mass. vigil ends in peace

BY KEN MAGUIRE

The Associated Press

NATICK, Massachusetts — A protest vigil at a parish slated for closure by the Boston archdiocese ended when police sealed off the 114-year-old church following its final Mass and ordered parishioners to leave.

About a dozen parishioners had resumed the vigil at Sacred Heart Church on Sunday morning after two church members, Anne Green and Leo Ryan, were arrested for refusing to leave following Christmas Eve Mass on Friday night.

But after several hours, police entered the building and told the parishioners they would be arrested if they didn't leave. No arrests were made.

The closure is part of a reorganization plan announced last spring by Archbishop Sean O'Malley. The move was in response to declining attendance, a shortage of priests and financial pressure caused in part by the clergy sex abuse crisis. The archdiocese is shutting down or consolidating 83 churches by year's end.

Brendan Melchiorri, 14, who led Sacred Heart weeping with the other evicted parishioners, said the closure was "one of the worst days of my entire life."

"I was baptized in this church, and I've grown up in this church," he said. "It's wrong. It's horrible. This shouldn't be happening. I can't believe I'm never going to see the inside of my church ever again."

Kelly Lynch, a spokeswoman for the archdiocese, said there was no decision to take a harder line against the protests.

"The decisions made at Sacred Heart were based on circumstances particular to this parish," she said.

Parishioners at eight other churches continued around-the-clock vigils to staff off their closures.



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Comair looks to resume operations

US Airways still sorting through piles of luggage

BY JOHN NOLAN
The Associated Press

HEBRON, Ky. — Regional airline Comair will need several days to resume a full schedule of flights that were grounded over the busy holiday weekend due to a computer failure, a company official said.

A day after all 1,100 of Comair's flights were canceled, customers frustrated from days of delays and cancellations got some relief Sunday when the airline resumed 172 flights, about 15 percent of its normal schedule.

"We anticipate Comair will be able to operate on a full schedule by Wednesday," said Nick Miller, a spokesman for the Delta subsidiary based at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. "That is our goal."

About 100 people stood in line Sunday at the ticket counter shared by Comair and Delta, waiting to be helped by two dozen agents. Nearby in the terminal were huge piles of lost luggage.

Comair wasn't the only airline



THE (CINCINNATI) ENQUIRER/AP

A Transportation Security Administration worker stands among lost luggage Sunday at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport in Hebron, Ky. A spokesman for Cincinnati-based Comair, which was forced to cancel flights over the holiday weekend, said the airline expects to operate on a full schedule by Wednesday.

that experienced problems during the holiday travel rush. US Airways started chipping away Sunday at a mountain of backed-up luggage, part of what its chief executive called an "operational meltdown." Hundreds of US Airways flights were canceled from Friday to Sunday, the result

of severe weather Thursday and large numbers of baggage handlers, ramp workers and flight attendants calling in sick.

US Airways was operating at near-normal levels by Sunday, when it had canceled 43 of about 1,200 flights systemwide. That was down from 143 scratched

flights on Saturday and 176 on Friday.

Comair's computer shutdown forced the airline to cancel all of its Saturday flights. Miller did not know how many customers were affected, but said the airline serves 30,000 travelers in 118 cities on a normal day.

Travel woes

GROUNDING: Comair and US Airways were still trying to get their normal schedule of flights off the ground after hundreds of cancellations over the holiday weekend.

WHAT HAPPENED?: Comair blamed a failed computer that manages flight assignments. US Airways blamed Thursday's severe weather and a large number of employees calling in sick.

BACK ON TRACK: US Airways was mostly up and running, but was still delivering a mountain of late luggage. Officials at Comair — which was only about 15 percent operational by Sunday — said their goal for a return to a full flight schedule was Wednesday.

— The Associated Press

Jackson Lasher, 26, and wife Julie, 27, of Wilmore, Ky., called Comair about 50 times Saturday before finally reaching a worker who told them their flight to Des Moines, Iowa, on Sunday was canceled.

Comair booked the couple on a Delta flight to Minneapolis, where Lasher's parents would pick them up.

"We feel very fortunate that we are able to get out today," Lasher said Sunday. "A lot of people here today are under much worse circumstances."

Maryclare Dale and Joann Loviglio of The Associated Press contributed to this story from Philadelphia.

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U.S. pledges more aid to Laos for UXO removal

BY FREDERIC J. FROMMER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Three decades after the end of the Vietnam War, the United States is increasing aid to help remove unexploded ordnance that continues to kill people in the former war zone — especially in Laos, where 2 million tons of bombs were dropped.

During the war, the United States bombed Laos relentlessly for a decade in an effort to cut off North Vietnamese supply lines.

Though the war ended 30 years ago, the carnage from those bombings continues.

Nearly a third of the bombs failed to explode, lying in wait as "de facto anti-personnel mines," according to a Human Rights Watch report. The bombs have killed roughly 6,000 Laotians since the end of fighting.

"Every time I go to Laos, I meet fresh bomb victims who have lost an arm or a leg or two," said Jim Harris, a retired Wisconsin school principal who helps educate people about the experience of Laotian refugees in his state. U.S. pilots dropped 2 million tons of bombs on Laos from 1964-1973, double the amount dropped on Germany in World War II.

The United States has agreed to nearly double the amount of aid it provides to help remove those bombs, known as unexploded ordnance, or UXO. Congress approved \$2.5 million for bomb re-

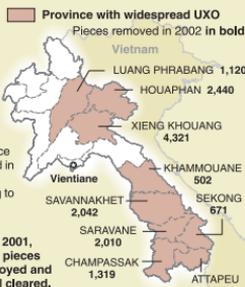
UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE IN LAOS

A deadly remainder of war

The presence of unexploded ordnance (UXO) is widespread in nine of Laos' 17 provinces, according to a government monitoring group.

Between 1995 and 2001, more than 292,000 pieces of UXO were destroyed and 4,600 acres of land cleared.

SOURCES: Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Program; U.S. Department of State



moval in Laos next year, up from \$1.4 million, as part of a move to normalize trade relations with the impoverished Southeast Asian country.

But the improvement in trade relations and even the increased funding for bomb removal were opposed by some critics who said Laos continues to persecute its Hmong minority that fought alongside the CIA during the Vietnam War.

"Why should the U.S. taxpayer pay to remove land mines and unexploded ordnance from the Viet-

nam War, when the Lao government and military are involved in military operations against the Hmong people?" asked Philip Smith, the Washington director of Lao Veterans of America.

But Rep. Betty McCollum, a Minnesota Democrat, said the United States "has a moral obligation to partner with the people of Laos to help eliminate the ordnance and put the land back into productive use for this impoverished nation."

Many of the Hmong people who fled Laos, settled in Minnesota and Wisconsin in the

Continuing toll

From 1973 to 1996, unexploded ordnance caused 10,649 deaths and injuries, according to the U.S. Department of State.

Average number of UXO incidents, annually

1973-1976	1,100
1977-1986	360
1987-1996	240

Demographics of casualties

10%	4%
Women	Young girls
27%	59%
Young boys	Adult men

While the Laotian government is in charge of bomb removal, it relies on help from other countries and outside groups to help pay for it. The Laotian bomb removal agency, UXO Lao, hit a crisis point a couple of years ago.

"Money wasn't coming in as sufficient numbers, and UXO Lao had to let go of half of its employees," said Douglas Hartwick, the U.S. ambassador to Laos from 2001 until last July. "So there was a big push on the part of donors, and the Lao government to put together a long-term coherent strat-

egy to clean up the unexploded bombs."

The agency's annual budget is around \$4 million, according to its Web site. Officials with UXO Lao did not respond to e-mails seeking comment.

Hartwick said the explosives removal process, using metal detectors, is painstakingly slow. "You're getting constant hits with a metal detector," said Hartwick. "You've got strapping like you wouldn't believe, plus bullets, mortars and grenades."

The Mine Advisory Group, a non-governmental organization in Great Britain that helps destroy land mines and unexploded ordnance worldwide, is one of several private groups that receive U.S. money for work in Laos.

Sean Tilton, the group's spokesman, said, "It's welcome news that the United States is doing more to help."

During a visit to Laos in October, he saw seven people killed when a man hit a bomb while chopping wood. Just a few days later, he said, two boys were killed when playing with tennis-ball-sized cluster bombs.

He said many of the injuries and fatalities occur when poor Laotians are attracted to the explosives in search of scrap metal. "You can get \$1 for seven pounds of steel or about two pounds of aluminum."

"For a typical family making \$20 a year farming, a dollar is worth an awful lot," Sutton said.

FDA OKs study of Ecstasy for anxiety in terminal patients

The Washington Post

For some, the diagnosis comes out of the blue. For others, it arrives after a long battle. Either way, the news that death is just a few months away poses a daunting challenge for both doctor and patient.

Drugs can ease pain and reduce anxiety, but what about the more profound issues that come with impending death? The wish to resolve lingering conflicts with family members. The longing to know, before it's too late, what it means to love, or what it means to live. There is no medicine to address such disease.

Or is there? This month, in a little-noticed administrative decision, the Food and Drug Administration gave the green light to a Harvard proposal to test the benefits of the illegal street drug known as Ecstasy in patients diagnosed with severe anxiety related to advanced cancer.

The drug, also known as 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA, has been referred to by psychiatrists as an "empathogen," a drug especially good at putting people in touch with their emotions. Some believe it could help patients come to terms with the end of life.

The FDA's approval marks a milestone for a small but increasingly effective movement favoring a more open-minded attitude toward the therapeutic potential of psychedelic drugs, virtually all of which have been criminalized and disparaged for decades as medically useless.

In the coming year, advocates also hope to submit to the FDA an application to test psilocybin and LSD as treatments for a debilitating syndrome known as cluster headaches.



Elicia Battle poses in a Cleveland gym on Dec. 15.

Battle gained fame in 2003 by falsely claiming she lost a winning Mega Millions ticket worth \$162 million. Battle said it's now time for her to hold down a job.

AP

Lottery liar takes job battle to the ring

BY JOE MILICIA

The Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Ever since she claimed to lose that winning lottery ticket, Elicia Battle's reputation has been on the ropes. Still struggling with disgrace a year after insisting that Mega Millions jackpot was rightfully hers, Battle says she had a hard time landing a job.

Now she'll be looking to land jobs — in her new career as a boxer.

Her ring name? "Mega Battle."

The 41-year-old said she's been training for seven months and will be ready to make her debut next month.

She still insists that she thought she bought the winning ticket worth \$162 million. The mother of four grabbed national headlines by saying she lost the ticket for the Dec. 30, 2003, drawing when she dropped her purse outside a convenience store in suburban South Euclid.

Police said they had no reason to believe Battle was lying; her description of picking the winning numbers based on family

birthdays and ages seemed plausible. And it was known that the winner picked their own numbers.

But after the real winner, hospital worker Rebecca Jemison, claimed the prize, Battle had some explaining to do.

"She tearfully apologized, saying, 'I wanted to win so bad for my kids and my family.' She was convicted in April of filing a false police report, a misdemeanor, on put on one year's probation.

Battle said since then she's struggled to find work.

"It's been complicated getting a job. 'Aren't you that lady — I can't go anywhere, where without people knowing who I am,' she said.

She trains with Romeo Conner, who has taught boxers for 20 years. He said he's never talked to her about the Mega Millions fiasco. He said he believes in Battle because of her dedication to training.

"If she was pretending, I would have known by now," Conner said. "I deliberately make stuff extremely hard and she keeps coming back the next day."

Kwanzaa celebrates focus on education

The Record (Bergen County, N.J.)

HACKENSACK, N.J. — For Marlene Ware, a teacher at Teaneck High School, Kwanzaa is an opportunity to demystify Africa.

"A lot of African-Americans to this day really don't acknowledge the role that Africa has in the world," Ware said. As organizer of the high school's annual Kwanzaa celebration, which was held earlier this month, Ware uses the holiday to demonstrate the importance of Africa to people of all races.

Families and educators look to Kwanzaa as a way to educate young people, particularly young African-Americans, about Africa as well as the struggles blacks have faced in the United States.

"It invites family time and family unity and it gives them ather sense of who they are," said Keli Drew Lockhart-Ba of Trenton, a psychologist who celebrates the holiday with her family.

Kwanzaa was first observed in 1966. It was created by Kwanzaa Karenga, now the chairman of the black studies department at California State University at Long Beach, as a way for African-Americans to celebrate their roots in Africa. It is now observed by millions of people around the world.

IN THE WORLD

Diego Garcia Navy base spared damage in quake

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Navy support facility located near the center of the Indian Ocean was spared any damage from Sunday's devastating ocean surges.

Officials said the Diego Garcia Navy Support Facility, which houses about 1,700 military personnel and 1,500 civilian contractors, suffered no damage related to Sunday's earthquake and ensuing tsunamis.

Personnel at the facility's billeting office contacted by Stars and Stripes on Monday reported no unusual activity or problems over the weekend.

Diego Garcia, the southernmost island in the Chagos Archipelago, sits about 1,000 miles south of India and roughly 2,000 miles from the earthquake's epicenter.

But officials in Somalia, whose coast is nearly 3,000 from the earthquake's center, reported more than 100 deaths in coastal areas as a result of tidal waves.

Carolyn Bell, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Geological Survey, said even though an earthquake like Sunday's will radiate destructive waves in all directions, the damage caused by the water differs greatly depending on the undersea topography.

She speculated that the numerous coral reefs may have dissipated some of the waves' impact on



SAG BRUNNER/Stars and Stripes

the British-owned island, resulting in only a slightly higher tide that residents might not necessarily notice.

She said residents of coastal areas in Australia reported no effects from the earthquake, even though researchers know the sea levels there rose several feet.

Diego Garcia is a horseshoe-shaped island about 39 miles long, surrounded by coral reefs on all sides. Its highest point is only 22 feet above sea level.

Both Naval and Air Force personnel are stationed on the island. The facility was used to support and launch strikes against Iraq in the first Gulf War, and was used for strikes against the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan, and again in 2003 for strikes in Iraq.

The Navy has eight ships active in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and officials said none reported any damage from Sunday's disaster.

E-mail Leo Shane III at: shane@starsandstripes.com



Relatives carry the body of child who was killed by waves at Silver Beach in Cuddalore, India, on Monday. Massive waves triggered by an earthquake slammed into southern India on Sunday, killing thousands.

Quake toll passes 22,000

BY DILIP GANGULY

The Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Rescuers piled up bodies Monday along southern Asian coastlines devastated by tsunamis that obliterated seaside towns and killed more than 22,000 people in 10 countries. With thousands missing and the death toll expected to climb far higher, aid agencies and nations rushed to help millions of people left homeless or without clean water.

Hundreds of children were buried in mass graves in India, and

mortuaries and hospitals struggled to cope with the catastrophe.

Somalia reported hundreds of deaths, some 3,000 miles away from the earthquake off Indonesia that sent tsunami raging across the Indian Ocean.

The International Red Cross reported 23,700 deaths and expressed concern about waterborne diseases like malaria and cholera. Jan Egelund, the U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator, said millions of people were affected — by lost homes, polluted drinking water, destroyed sanitation — and that they are working to account for "probably be many billions of dollars."

Government and aid officials suggested the toll could jump even further, citing unconfirmed reports of thousands more deaths on Sumatra and on India's Andaman and Nicobar islands, areas closest to the quake's epicenter.

Walls of water sped away from the quake's epicenter at more than 500 mph before crashing into the region's shorelines, sweeping people and fishing villages out to sea.

The governments of Indonesia and Thailand conceded that public warnings came too late or not at all. But officials insisted they could not know the seriousness of the threat because no tsunami warning system exists for the Indian Ocean.

Rescuers converged on beaches and islands throughout the region to search for survivors, as troops in the region struggled to deliver urgently needed aid. Pakistan, India's nuclear-armed rival, offered assistance.

Chaos erupted at the airport in Phuket, Thailand, as hundreds of tourists, many wounded and weeping, tried to board planes.

Sri Lanka said more than 10,000 people were killed along its coastlines, and Tamil rebels said 2,000 people died in its territory, raising that country's toll to more than 12,000. Indonesia reported about 5,000 deaths and India 4,000. Thailand said hundreds of people were dead and thousands more were missing. Deaths also were reported in Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Somalia. The Red Cross reported 6,000 deaths in

U.S. aid

WASHINGTON — The United States dispatched disaster teams Monday and prepared a \$15 million aid package to the Asian countries hit by a massive earthquake and tsunami. U.S. officials were seeking to contact hundreds of Americans who remain unaccounted for in the region.

State Department officials said embassies in the affected countries are still open, and they are working to account for all Americans who may have been vacationing or living near those countries' coastlines.

Officials have created a toll-free hot line for U.S. citizens to get more information on relatives who may have been in the affected areas on Sunday. For Americans outside the United States, that number is (317) 472-2328.

From staff and wire reports

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Associated Press reporters Lev T. Duhov in Banda Aceh, Indonesia; Justin Wamborn and Ailsa Tan in Phuket, Thailand; and S. Srivastava in Cuddalore, India, contributed to this report.

Europe tallies dead from Asia quake

By D'ARCY DORAN
The Associated Press

LONDON — A British man in Sri Lanka recalled clinging to a floating refrigerator as massive tidal waves threatened to drag him and his son out to sea. A day after a 9.0-magnitude undersea quake sent gigantic waves crashing into some of the region's most popular beaches, hundreds of Europeans remained stranded in Asia as their governments scrambled Monday to tally their dead and missing and to make arrangements to ferry the tourists out.

Four operators throughout Europe on Monday canceled trips to Asian holiday destinations devastated by massive tidal waves followed by a huge earthquake in the Indian Ocean.

Many European governments advised their citizens against traveling to the Maldives, an archipelago popular with tourists, as well as tsunami-struck parts of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and India.

Thousands of Europeans had been vacationing in sunny Southeast Asia for the Christmas holidays and governments reported at least two dozens Europeans dead among the thousands killed across six Asian nations.

Duncan Ridgely, from Hertfordshire, north of London, recounted the horror Monday. "I managed to get a hold of my son's hand and reach safely," Ridgely said in a telephone interview with British Broadcasting Corp. radio. "There are about 30 of us Europeans stuck here with water all around us, with crocodiles and things all around us."

"We can't get out," he said. "No one knows we're here."

Britain's Foreign Office confirmed 11 deaths. Earlier Monday, Foreign Secretary Jack Straw warned the country to brace for more deaths.

"We have had a number of deaths of British nationals reported to our embassies and high commissions but they have not yet been confirmed. The numbers will be higher," Straw told BBC. Sixty-nine others were hospitalized, the Foreign Office said.



Metropolitan Police staff in north London provide a call service for British people worried about relatives or friends who may have been caught up in the earthquake which has shaken southeast Asia.

At least 11 Italians were killed, the Italian Foreign Ministry said Monday, nine at the Thai resort islands of Phuket and Phi Phi, and two in Sri Lanka. Many more Italians were missing and dozens were being treated in hospitals.

Norway's Foreign Ministry said family and friends reported 10 Norwegians dead — eight in Thailand and two in Sri Lanka. It was unable to immediately independently confirm the deaths.

Nine Swedes were reported killed and three Danes vacationing on the Thai island of Phuket, a popular holiday destination, were killed, the Foreign Ministry said in Copenhagen.

In Helsinki, Finland, the Foreign Ministry reported that a Finn was killed in Sri Lanka.

At least two Swedes were killed in Thailand, Karlo Luanko, a Swedish Embassy official in Bangkok, told state-run broadcaster SVT, and the Danish Foreign Ministry said three Danes were killed in Phuket.

France's deputy foreign minister Renaud Muselier said three French had died — one in Sri Lanka, one in Thailand and the third in India.

Few servicemembers in Europe take vacations to Southeast Asia

By CHARLIE COON
Stars and Stripes

Travel agents who deal with Americans serving in Europe say Southeast Asia — the scene of the earthquake and tsunami on Sunday that have killed at least 22,000 people — is not a popular travel destination for their clients.

"That's a destination we hardly ever book, even though the Maldives are pretty popular at the moment," said Marco Port, a travel agent at RTT Destinations Unlimited, an Air Force-owned agency located at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

"We hardly ever have anyone interested in going to [Southeast Asia]."

The vast majority of U.S. servicemembers in Europe who travel during the winter holidays go to the United States, according to Port and others who serve military communities.

Those who do travel to seek

warmer weather usually prefer closer destinations, such as Turkey and Spain, they said.

Flavia Austin of the Bohling Agency in Darmstadt, Germany, estimated that "90 percent" of the airline tickets she sold were for trips to the United States or for family members flying from America to Europe.

"It's very seldom for [U.S. customers] to buy anything to Southeast Asia," she said.

Servicemembers, though, will occasionally travel to the region for the holidays, "especially if they are married to a Filipino or somebody from Thailand," said Connie Trauth of SATO Travel in Mannheim, Germany.

"But from our office, I don't know of any customers who are booked for those dates to those [affected] areas."

"They're popular, though, with Europeans and Germans because of the warm weather."

E-mail: Charlie Coon at: coonc@mail.mil; stripes.rod@mail.mil

No warning: A first-hand account of the tsunami

By MICHAEL DOBBS
The Washington Post

WELIGAMA, Sri Lanka — Disaster struck with no warning out of a faultlessly clear blue sky.

I was taking my morning swim around the island that my brother Geoffrey, a businessman, had bought on a whim a decade ago and turned into a tropical paradise 200 yards from one of the world's most beautiful beaches.

I heard my brother shouting at me, "Come back! Come back! There's something strange happening with the sea." He was swimming behind me, but closer to the shore.

There was barely a ripple. My brother's house rests on a rock 60 feet above the level of the sea.

Then I noticed that the water around me was rising, climbing up the rock walls of the island with astonishing speed. The vast circle of golden sand around Weligama Bay was disappearing rapidly, and the water had reached the level of the coastal road, fringed with palm trees.

As I swam to shore, my mind was momentarily befuddled by two contrasting impressions — the idyllic blue sky and the rapidly rising waters.

In less than a minute, the water level had risen at least 15 feet, but I was swimming in calm, with barely a wave in sight.

Within minutes, the beach and the area behind it had become an inland sea that rushed over the road and poured into the flimsy houses on either side. The speed with which it all happened seemed like a scene from the Bible, a natural phenomenon unlike anything I had experienced.

I grabbed a wooden catamaran that the local people use as a fishing boat. My brother jumped on the boat, and we were swept up and down on the catamaran as the water rushed past us into the village beyond the road.

After a few minutes I felt it was safe to swim to the shore. What I did not realize was that the floodwaters would recede as quickly and dramatically as they had risen.

All of a sudden, I found myself being swept out to sea with startling speed. For the first time, I felt afraid.

I swam in the direction of a local catamaran, grabbed the hull and pulled myself to safety. My weight must have slowed the boat down, and soon I was stranded on the sand. As the water rushed out of the bay, I scrambled onto the main road.

Screams were coming from the houses beyond the road, many of which were still half full of water that had seeped into the inhabitants' lives. Villagers were walking, stunned, along the road, unable to comprehend what had taken place.

The holiday that we planned and dreamed about for many months is in ruins. But we feel fortunate — fortunate to be alive.

Immigrants in U.S. await word from Asia

By DAVID N. GOODMAN
The Associated Press

DETROIT — Ann Gopalakrishnan spoke to her mother and friends in the southeastern Indian city of Madras, but a grim uncertainty looms for many immigrant communities in the United States as they await word after tsunamis ravaged nine countries.

A 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck beneath the Indian Ocean off the coast of Indonesia early Sunday, the most powerful tremor in four decades, sending walls of water crashing ashore in the region's waterfront communities.

Officials said the death toll was rising, warning that disease outbreaks were possible.

Meanwhile, in the Detroit suburb of Westland, Gopalakrishnan

was reflective. Residents of Madras, a waterfront city, are accustomed to seasonal storms but have no experience with tidal waves, she said.

"I was on that beach," said Gopalakrishnan, 29. "I don't know if those families are still alive."

Immigrants from across southern Asia were preparing donations for friends, family and strangers hit by the tragedy.

In California, where roughly half the Indonesians in the United States live, about 150 people gathered at an Indonesian language Catholic mass late Sunday at St. Stephen's Church in Monterey Park.

"Any natural disaster is beyond our control and all we can do is pray for comfort for the people," the Rev. Yosef Dowa said through a translator.

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It's only one of the holidays

The writer of "What 'holiday' is it?" (letter, Dec. 22) is reminded that Christmas is only one traditional day that is celebrated during this interesting holiday period.

What does the writer do after the stroke of midnight on Dec. 31st? Yell "Merry Christmas" while all of the other revelers are saying "Happy New Year." I believe that the Jewish people have a right to celebrate the holidays without saying "Merry Christmas" to each other. History reveals that it was the pagans who started celebrating their holiday on the 21st of December a long time before the Christians moved their icon's birthday to enhance their religion's appeal.

Most people say "Happy Holidays" because they want to include everyone and not unintentionally offend. It is very rude to assume that everyone in an audience is Jewish, pagan or Christian or to try to impose your brand of religion on strangers. However, if I know for sure what someone is, I greet them with their traditional greeting.

Also, I do not believe that biologists, doctors and scientists can be classified as lunatics just because modern-day politicians have caved in to far-right religious political pressure in the pursuit of power. If people such as the writer would learn to be a little more tolerant of others' rights to choose what they want to celebrate, we would be a lot closer to achieving hope, peace and joy for everyone.

So, why does it matter how you are greeted during this long-standing, pre-Christian end-of-the-year holiday season, as long as you are included in the greetings?

Donald Trump, Iraq

Camp Anacoda, Iraq

Thank you for schedule change

I would like to thank Army leaders at the 1st Infantry Division, Joseph Tafaya, Department of Defense Dependents Schools-Europe superintendent, and Harvey Gerry, DODDS-Europe chief of staff. As a parent of a child in Würzburg (Germany) Elementary School, I am elated to have my son's spring break moved to coincide with our block leave ("DODDS" schedules spring break for 1st ID schools," Dec. 21). I have spoken to a number of 1st ID parents and all are in agreement. I would also like to say sorry I am that some individuals may be inconvenienced by this "terrible precedent for future deployments."

U.S. soldiers worldwide are currently changing their lives at the Army. We cannot take back the time lost from our loved ones over the past 12 months. With previous deployments and training exercises, some have been with their families for 30 consecutive days in 24 months or more. The very least we can do is take 30 days' leave and try to catch up on the lost birthdays, the lost holidays, bedtime stories, Christmas, baseball games and such. What about the children? Are they better off going to school during our block leave, taking a week or two off during block leave, or during their spring

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break (most undoubtedly would), or making this change?

I understand there may be a need to reschedule some sports events, but would it be better to have to forfeit due to the children being absent? I believe the best option has been taken.

In this Army we all make sacrifices, whether servicemember, family member or Department of Defense employee. We all need to take stock in our priorities and realize that it is not what we do, it is how we do it.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Harvey
Forward Operating Base Danang, Iraq

Park that logic somewhere

I guess I should feel complimented when people notice me walking with a limp and often just assume that I'm only sprained my ankle or injured my hip. The reality is that it is not my leg and now use a prosthetic limb to get around—but you won't hear me complain about that.

Twice in the last week, however, I have arrived home only to discover that someone had parked in my clearly marked handicapped parking spot. On both occasions, I took the effort to locate the person to ask them why they would park in a handicapped spot. I was surprised when they told me that they thought it was just a "place holder" for work vehicles or just to meet some regulations and that they knew that "handicapped individuals were not assigned PCS (permanent change of station) overseas."

What? Talk about discrimination! This sort of thinking couldn't be further from the truth. Under the Americans With Disabilities Act, the military and all other federal agencies assign people with disabilities and other physical challenges overseas. Stars and Stripes even ran recently a front-page article explaining how the military is allowing combat disabled soldiers to remain on active-duty status ("For some, loss of limb no reason to quit military," Dec. 5).

It's more than just a matter of respect. Most often, through no fault of their own, our brave soldiers, people in general, and certainly the elderly who have experi-

enced traumatic health problems have earned the need for handicapped parking spaces. Before parking in one of these reserved spaces, people really should pause to think about what they are doing. It's far from the same thing, but driving home and finding someone parked in your reserved spot is like finding some stranger sleeping in your bed, or like someone using your toothbrush.

Chuck Schultz
Frankfurt, Germany

What determines gas prices?

Last month on American Forces Network, an Army and Air Force Exchange Service spokesman announced that the price of gas was going up again. He stated that price-per-barrel-of-oil increases were the reason for the increase, but curiously failed to mention AAFES's policy to tie gas prices to the average stateside price.

Guess what? For the past few days, AFN has reported that gas prices have fallen more than 10 cents a gallon in the States. So kudos to AAFES, as your prices tied to price-per-barrel-of-oil or average stateside prices? Both of them are down significantly, but today I heard that your prices will increase again Jan. 1.

We're already paying more than 40 cents more per gallon than the average stateside price. When will AAFES quit gouging us?

Master Sgt. Burl Stuefflebidl
Ramstein, Germany

Tired of AAFES' reasoning

Well, here we are several months into dropping gas prices in the States with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service still holding their price.

I've been using AAFES gas stamps continuously since 1969 and I can tell you there have been ups and downs. However, even my willingness to accept its reasoning has worn out.

We, as customers, have been told several stories on how AAFES derives its pricing method for gasoline. We were told it is based on the average price in the United States. Now on the radio, the AAFES spokesman says it is now based on the price of a barrel of crude. Everyone listening to AFN lately has heard that gas prices have been falling in the United States for more than 10 weeks and the average cost in the States is \$1.86. Unfortunately, I am still paying \$2.34 for my diesel coupons, which can only be redeemed off base.

Oh, by the way, AAFES also lists its costs involve operation of the on-base gas station and coupon printing. Then why is diesel more expensive if I can't get it on base. Does printing diesel coupons cost more than printing regular or premium coupons? Why doesn't AAFES come clean to its customers on exactly how it does its pricing?

I, for one, am writing my congressman and senator, asking for a congressional inquiry into its pricing practices. Maybe AAFES has outlived its usefulness and the time has come to look into outsourcing.

Gene Campbell
Ramstein Air Base, Germany

BY GARRY TRUDEAU





EUROPEAN FORECAST

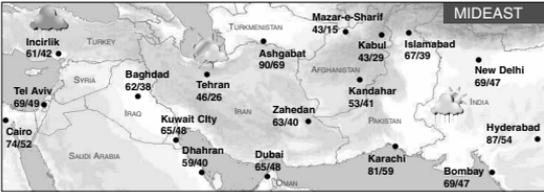
- Benelux:** Cloudy with rain/snow showers. Highs are in the upper 30s to lower 40s.
- Britain, Ireland:** Mostly cloudy with rain/showers. Highs are in the low to upper 40s.
- Croatia and Bosnia:** Cloudy with rain/showers and isolated thunderstorms and strong winds. Highs are in the mid to upper 40s.
- France:** Mostly cloudy with rain/showers. Highs in the lower 30s to lower 40s to the north and in the lower 50s to the south.
- Northern Germany:** Cloudy with rain/snow showers. Highs in the lower 30s to upper 30s.
- Southern Germany:** Cloudy with rain/snow showers. Highs are in the 30s.
- Hungary:** Cloudy/rain/snow showers. Highs are in the upper 30s to low 40s.
- Northern Italy:** Cloudy with rain/showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs are in the low 40s to low 50s.
- Southern Italy:** Cloudy with rain/showers. Isolated thunderstorms and strong winds. Highs are in the mid to upper 50s.
- Kosovo:** Cloudy with rain/showers, isolated thunderstorms and strong winds. Highs are in the 40s.
- Norway:** Cloudy with snow to the north and rain to the south. Highs are in the low 30s to low 40s.
- Portugal, Spain:** Mostly cloudy to cloudy with rain/showers. Highs are in the 50s.
- Turkey:** Mostly cloudy with rain/showers. Highs will be in the mid 50s to low 60s.

AFRICA

Cape Town	79	63	Mogadishu	91	73
Dakar	89	84	Nairobi	75	57
Freetown	89	71	Rabat	69	47
Harare	89	72	Tripoli	66	50

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	45	39	Manila	86	72
Bahrain	75	57	Mexico City	76	48
Beijing	62	31	Montreal	42	31
Bombay	83	61	Riyadh	76	55
Buenos Aires	68	51	Rio de Jan	82	72
Calcutta	79	66	Sofia	53	38
Hanoi	34	28	Sydney	83	63
Hong Kong	74	63	Tokyo	57	47



For current weather watches, warnings, and 5-day forecasts go to the USAF Operational Weather Squadron home page <http://www.sembach.af.mil> or <http://www.public.sembach.af.mil>

SUN & MOON

Sunrise (Baghdad)	7:06AM	Tomorrow	7:06AM
Sunrise (Frankfurt)	8:24AM	8:24AM	8:24AM
Sunset (Baghdad)	5:04PM	5:05PM	5:05PM
Sunset (Frankfurt)	4:31PM	4:31PM	4:31PM

Last 5 days moon phases: Last 5 days, New moon, First 5 days, Full moon

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Allison, Tex.	62	46	Colorado	53	37	City	Honolulu	53	33	PClly	New Orleans	65	47	City	San Antonio	67	51	City
Alton, Ohio	34	23	Colombus, S.C.	50	37	PClly	Harbor Spd	38	18	PClly	New York City	34	26	PClly	San Diego	61	54	Rain
Alton, N.Y.	29	27	Columbia, S.C.	59	34	City	Healds	58	34	City	Norfolk	37	30	City	San Jose	50	43	Rain
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Houston	66	53	PClly	North Rich	57	43	City	San Jose, Calif.	50	43	Rain
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Indianapolis	58	29	PClly	Oakland	61	44	City	Santa Fe	50	37	PClly
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Santa Fe, N.M.	50	37	PClly
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Savannah	59	39	City
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Savannah	59	39	City
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Savannah	59	39	City
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Savannah	59	39	City
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Savannah	59	39	City
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Savannah	59	39	City
Albany, N.Y.	34	23	Concord, N.H.	27	23	PClly	Jacksonville	60	29	PClly	Oklahoma City	61	44	City	Savannah	59	39	City
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Generous gift

CO DENVER — Residents of Samaritan House didn't know what to expect when the bearded, middle-aged man parked his sport utility vehicle in front of the downtown homeless shelter Christmas Eve.

The man walked into the building, pulled out a thick roll of \$100 bills and began passing them out to each of the approximately 300 residents.

As a crowd gathered, the man said he had once been homeless and knew what it was like to be in need. He did not identify himself and said only that he lived in Denver and had also distributed money at a Las Vegas shelter.

Lutefisks support GIs

MN GLENWOOD — Each year, Mike Field ships anywhere from 200,000 to 300,000 pounds of lutefisk from his small shop here to customers all over the United States.

But his latest order of the stinky fish crosses a new horizon.

One lutefisk-loving soldier has ordered 25 pounds of the pungent lyre-soaked fish to be shipped to Afghanistan as a "treat" for the servicemen and -women stationed there.

The order came from Mike Lindemoe, a serviceman with the U.S. Army stationed in Afghanistan — and yes, Lindemoe's the one who called it a "treat," Field said.

Field said that Lindemoe told him he wouldn't mind if it costs \$50 a plate, he wants the lutefisk, which is a holiday tradition for many with Scandinavian heritage.

Child welfare warned

FL ORLANDO — Days before a 4-year-old girl died from a blow to the head in a filthy motel room shared with five siblings and her parents, the state child welfare agency was told about her living conditions but declined to investigate, according to documents released Wednesday.

Kai Gadison was found dead Monday after her mother called 911 to report the child wasn't breathing. She died of blunt force trauma to the head, an autopsy report said. The mother, 27-year-old Kenya Hill, initially was held on charges of child abuse and violation of probation, but was charged Wednesday night with murder.

The other five children were being cared for in a foster home.

Busting out the boat

Ri LINCOLN — A Watsonocket man was restrained at gunpoint by a state Department of Environmental Management officer following a traffic dispute.

Stephen Chauvin, 24, was charged with felony assault with a dangerous weapon on Tuesday. The DEM officer spotted him walking from his truck toward an angler's boat with a 2-foot-long retractable boat on Route 116 shortly after 9 a.m.

Chauvin and the other driver had both pulled over to the side of the road.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

The DEM officer witnessed the confrontation and ordered Chauvin to put the boat down. When he failed to comply, the officer drew his weapon. Chauvin then stopped and was later charged by police.

Locks of rehabilitation

HI HONOLULU — Employees at Salon Bobbi N' Guy received an unexpected Christmas gift this season — locks of hair from an inmate in jail on drug charges.

Salon vice president Alex Choi said the hair was a welcome gift because it will be sent to Locks of Love, a nationwide nonprofit group that collects hair to make wigs for financially disadvantaged children suffering from hair loss because of illness.

The black hair — enough for about five wigs — arrived on Christmas Eve from a male inmate at the Waiawa Correctional Facility who said he wanted to make a sacrifice as proof of his sincere wish to turn his life around, Choi said.

Ominous message

NJ ALLENHURST — The decades-old message scrawled on the bottom of a dresser drawer was ominous — alluding to a murder and detailing the location of the victim's body.



Sundogs of winter

A sundog shines in the subzero temperatures as Don Baxter clears snow on Alkali Creek Road in Billings, Mont. Sundogs form because ice crystals refract each color of light differently.

But after fruitless digging by police in a backyard in the Monmouth County borough Wednesday, the message may prove more useful to a local author than to authorities.

Shovels, a backhoe and ground-penetrating radar failed to unearth any human remains from the yard of Richard Fericola, a doctor and author who says he might use the detail in his next book.

"My immediate decision was that we had to resolve this because I didn't want people saying a month or a year or 10 years from now, 'What happened to the body in your backyard?'" he said.

Fast food hero

LA BATON ROUGE — A McDonald's worker ran to the rescue of an allegedly drunk driver whose car was rolling toward a canal, pulling the man from behind the wheel about 10 feet before the vehicle fell into the water and submerged.

"He saved that man's life," fellow McDonald's employee Priscilla Morgan said of co-worker Tomio Harris.

The pair were working early Thursday morning when driver Brian Broussard, 20, pulled up to the drive-thru service window.

East Baton Rouge sheriff's deputies say when Broussard's foot slipped off the brake, the car began to roll toward a canal across the street from the McDonald's. Harris took off after it, pulling Broussard from the still-moving car just before it plunged into the canal.

Advanced pews available

OH AKRON — Joe and Kathy Tricaso weren't taking any chances on not getting a seat for Mass on Christmas Eve.

The couple, who live in the Akron suburb of Green, spent \$85 in a church auction last summer to reserve a pew.

Their investment paid off. The parking lot at Queen of Heaven Catholic Church was filling fast when they arrived an hour before Friday's 4 p.m. service.

"The rule is you're not allowed to save seats, and kind, loving Christians can get pretty mean-spirited if you tell them they can't sit down when they see an empty seat on a pew," Joe Tricaso said.

Here's mud in your way

VA RICHMOND — An American Airlines plane preparing for takeoff went off the runway and became stuck in mud Thursday at Richmond International Airport, shutting the airport's two main runways to all incoming flights, an airport spokesman said. American Airlines Flight 1239 bound for Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport was mired at the grassy juncture of the airport's two main runways around 8:20 a.m., airport spokesman Troy Bell said.

None of the 129 passengers or five crew members on the MD-80 was injured, Bell said. All passengers had been evacuated by 10:30 a.m.



Floppy the snowman A snowman yard ornament seems to relax on a bench as snow falls along Quinlan Street in Iuka, Miss.



Outta the way! Ronnie Martinez of Calallen, Texas, takes a ride down a hill at West Guth Park in Corpus Christi.



Parking nightmare

People walk through the Wal-Mart Supercenter parking lot in Buckhorn, Pa., towards their vehicles as a driver looks for one of the few empty spaces left in the lot while a shopper places bags into a SUV.



Hands-on job

Hand prints are visible in the heavy frost covering a door at the Hippodrome in Eveleth, Minn.



Icicles abound

Frigid cold and wind from Lake Michigan turn this shore marker at 31st Street Beach into a giant icicle in Chicago.



Consuming blaze

A home occupied by Debbie Hunt and Frank Holzkamp burns in McCracken County, Ky. The residents and their dog escaped and were not injured.

Scalding death

MI ROCHESTER HILLS — A pregnant woman was charged with killing her boyfriend's toddler daughter by scalding her in what prosecutors say was 147-degree water, then ignoring her suffering for several hours.

Letitia Ann Johnson, 27, of Orion Township was charged Wednesday with second-degree murder in the death of 22-month-old Jasmine Phillips.

Johnson gave the girl a bath Saturday night in scalding water, then put her to bed, according to her statements to police. Johnson was aware Jasmine was in pain, according to prosecutors.

Louie D. Phillips, 26, found his daughter Sunday morning and called 911, police said. She was pronounced dead at a hospital. The medical examiner ruled the death a homicide caused by dehydration from extensive third-degree burns.

Traffic deaths analysis

HI HILO — Big Island motorists died in traffic crashes at more than three times the rate of Oahu drivers from 2000 to 2003, while the county's frequency of vehicle fatalities, when adjusted for population, was nearly twice that of Maui and Kauai counties during that time, a state analysis found.

The statistics were contained in a study recently released by the state Department of Health.

The per-capita fatality rate for vehicle occupants was similar when figures were adjusted to account for the counties' different sizes. Deaths from motorcycle, bicycle and pedestrian accidents were excluded from the study.

State loses residents

MA BOSTON — Massachusetts was the only state in the nation to lose residents in 2004, U.S. Census data shows.

The state lost an estimated 3,852 people, or about 1.1 percent, in the last year, despite continuing growth in immigration to the Bay State, the Boston Sunday Globe reported.

Paul E. Harrington, an economist at Northeastern University's Center for Labor Market Studies, attributed the fall to a stagnant job market. He said the decline could be an ominous sign for the state.

"Population loss is a pretty fundamental number," he said.

Offsetting the trend is a boost in foreign immigrants, Harrington said, who are counted by the Census but often don't show up in job or unemployment data. That suggests that these workers are being paid under the table, which could create a "long-term economic growth problem," he said.

Line drawn at \$104M

FL MIAMI — A Florida appeals court threw out as "shockingly excessive" a jury's \$104 million verdict over a teenager who was left severely brain-damaged after becoming trapped underwater by the suction of a pool drain.

The 3rd District Court of Appeal on Wednesday ordered a new trial in the lawsuit brought by the family of Lorenzo Peterson against

pump maker Sta-Rite Industries. Peterson died earlier this year, after the trial.

He nearly drowned while swimming with friends at age 15 when a Sta-Rite pump sucked his arm into an uncovered drain at an apartment complex in North Miami in 2000.

Six adults were unable to free the teen. He was eventually released when a police officer arrived and shut off the power.

West Nile virus down

NY ROCHESTER — Cases of West Nile virus plummeted in New York state in 2004, health officials said.

The mosquito-borne illness prompted some panic when it first hit America in 1999, but drew little attention this year in New York.

In all, 10 people tested positive statewide for the virus in 2004, compared with 71 last year. Around 200 birds had confirmed West Nile this year, down from 1,367 in 2003.

Experts aren't sure yet if cases will remain scarce or whether the drop is simply part of a down cycle in the virus' lifespan.

Land preservation

VA CHARLOTTESVILLE — A preservation agreement will keep about 1,060 acres surrounding Monticello — land that was once part of Thomas Jefferson's plantation — much as it was in his day.

The nonprofit Thomas Jefferson Foundation announced a plan to place the land surrounding the historic house in permanent conservation easement, which cedes all development and division rights to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, a state agency committed to preserving areas of scenic and historical value.

"The mission of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation is preservation and education," said its president, Dan Jordan.

The areas placed under easement include three separate tracts: a 418-acre parcel known as the Home Farm, the 560-acre Tufton property and 80 acres bordering the Rivanna River. All the land was once part of the original Monticello plantation site.

Chicago-centric auction

IL CHICAGO — Dyeing the Chicago River green on St. Patrick's Day: \$7,600. Placing the winning bid for a halved city tradition: Priceless.

The city's eBay auction of Chicago-specific experiences and treasures ended Wednesday night after raising more than \$242,000 for the city's arts and cultural programs — including the winning \$7,600 bid for the opportunity to dye the Chicago River green March 17.

The top bid came in at \$21,000 for a wedding package that includes catering for 100 in the city's ornate Chicago Cultural Center overlooking Michigan Avenue. The second biggest draw — dinner for 10 with television broadcaster Bill Kurtis, accompanied by a documentary about the winning bidder's life — went for \$18,600.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Screenboard page in the Sports section or AFRT's Web site at <http://myfnr.dodmedia.com/>

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2004

(AFR-FAMILY)	(AFR-MOVIE)	(AFR-ENTERTAIN)	(AFR-NEWS)	(AFR-NEWS)	(AFR-SPORTS)	(AFR-SPORTS)	(AFR-PACIFIC)
9:00 The Wild Thornberrys	Movie "Decal" (2004) Mario Thomas, Bret Culen. A woman makes alarming discoveries about her missing spouse.	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	Nightline	NBA Basketball Teams to Be Announced. (Part 1)	Burt Wolf: Taste of Freedom	Jeopardy!
9:30 The Wild Thornberrys			Headline News	Army Newswatch		Sweet Dreams	Headline News
10:00 ChalkZone (E)			ESPNs	Hardball With Chris Matthews		Best For Less	ESPNs
10:30 ChalkZone (E)		(3:35) Guiding Light	Advisory Block			Striped	Pacific Report
11:00 Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	(10:40) Movie "Harvey" (1999) Harry Anderson, Leslie Nielsen	(17) General Hospital	NFL Football Philadelphia Eagles at St. Louis Rams. From the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis.	The O'Reilly Factor	NBA Football	The King of Queens	NFL Football Philadelphia Eagles at St. Louis Rams. From the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis.
12:00 Kim Possible	A man's best friend and confidante is an invisible rabbit.	Headline News	Today	FOX News	SportsCenter	That '70s Show (Part 1 of 2)	Griffins
12:30 Kim Possible		Judge Judy		Fox and Friends	College Football: Motry City, Conn. vs. "Saxons" From Detroit.	Griffins: "Laggy My Egg"	Charm'd
13:00 Planet's Funniest Animals	Movie "Hear Window" (1998) Drama) Christopher Reeve, Darryl Hannah.	Today		Fox and Friends		Charm'd	Aily McBeal
13:30 Wild Thornberrys Movie: The Origin of Donnie			ESPNs	Pacific Report		Any Day Now	ESPNs
14:30 Funniest Home Videos	Movie "Tomorrow Never Dies" (1997) Pierce Brosnan, Jonathan Pryce, James Bond ties to short-circuit a communications tycoon.	Today	Teen Kids News (E)	The Tonight Show	American Morning	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
15:30 Full House			Jeopardy!	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
16:00 Pokemon "Shogdo Attack"			AFN Evening News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
16:30 Yu-Gi-Oh!			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
17:00 Aaahh! Real Monsters	The Entertainers		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
17:30 Rocket Power	Behind the Scenes		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
18:00 SpongeBob SquarePants	Entertainment Tonight		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
18:30 Rugrats	Entertainment Tonight		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
19:00 The Proud Family	Movie "I Scary Movie 3" (2003, Comedy) Anna Farris, Anthony Anderson.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
19:30 The Amanda Show	Movie "The Notebook" (2004, Romance) Ryan Reynolds, Gena Lee. A man tells a story to a woman about two lovers.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
20:00 Ewrowed The doctors invest... a 30-year-old murder.	Movie "Carpathia" (1999) Science Fiction) Willard Hurt, Mimi Rogers. A spy sabotages a family's space mission to Mars.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
21:00 Sister, Sister "The Breakup"	Movie "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan" (1982)		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
21:30 Sister, Sister "The Tutor"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
22:00 The Cosby Show			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
22:30 Home Improvement			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
23:00 Touched by an Angel "Flight of Angels"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
23:30 Touched by an Angel "Flight of Angels"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2004							
00:00 Aaahh! Real Monsters	(11:50) Movie "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan" (1982)		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
00:30 Rocket Power			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
0:30 SpongeBob SquarePants			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
1:30 Rugrats "Wearing Tummy"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
2:00 The Proud Family			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
2:30 The Amanda Show			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
3:00 Ewrowed The doctors invest... a 30-year-old murder.	Movie "Carpathia" (1999) Science Fiction) Willard Hurt, Mimi Rogers. A spy sabotages a family's space mission to Mars.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
3:30 Sister, Sister "The Breakup"	Movie "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan" (1982)		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
4:00 Sister, Sister "The Tutor"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
4:30 Sister, Sister "The Tutor"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
5:00 Sesame Street (E)			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
5:30 Barney & Friends (E)			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
6:00 Barney & Friends (E)			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
6:30 Blue's Clues			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
7:00 Dragon Tales (E)			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
7:30 Bob the Builder			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
8:00 The Wiggles "Play"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
8:30 Dora the Explorer			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
9:00 The Wild Thornberrys			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
9:30 The Wild Thornberrys			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
10:00 ChalkZone (E)			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
10:30 ChalkZone Strip in chases.			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
11:00 Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius	(10:40) Movie "I Air Force One" (1997) Harrison Ford. The U.S. president battles terrorists aboard his plane.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
11:30 Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
12:00 Kim Possible			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
12:30 Kim Possible "October 31st"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
13:00 Planet's Funniest Animals	Movie "Benny & Joon" (1993, Drama) Adam Quirin, Tippi Hedren.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
13:30 Kim Possible "Double Team"	(4:35) Movie "The Peacemaker" (1997, Suspense) George Clooney, Nicole Kidman. A soldier and a soldier seek stolen nuclear weapons.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
14:30 Funniest Home Videos			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
15:30 Full House			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
16:00 Pokemon "Brain the Waza"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
16:30 Yu-Gi-Oh!			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
17:00 Aaahh! Real Monsters	Inside the Actors Studio: Donny Osmond.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
17:30 Rocket Power Star dog.			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
18:00 SpongeBob SquarePants	Coming Attractions		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
18:30 Rugrats	Entertainment Tonight		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
19:00 Even Stevens "Get a Job"	Movie "The Mummy Returns" (2001, Adventure) Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz. Aologist rescues the O'Connell's precious son.		Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
19:30 Gilmore Girls "Presenting Loretta Gilmore"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
20:00 Gilmore Girls "Presenting Loretta Gilmore"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
21:00 Degrassi: Next Generation			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
21:30 Degrassi: Next Generation			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
22:00 Home Improvement			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
22:30 Touched by an Angel "How do You Spell Faith?"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
23:00 Touched by an Angel "How do You Spell Faith?"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show
23:30 Touched by an Angel "How do You Spell Faith?"			Headline News	Headline News	Headline News	Any Day Now	The Tonight Show

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FACES

No research for this investigator

When **Louise Lombard** landed a role as the new crime-scene investigator on "CSI," a producer suggested she prepare by visiting a morgue.

"I turned to her and said, 'That's where the acting comes in,'" Lombard said. "There's no way I'm going to see a corpse just in the name of research. I'm dedicated, but not THAT dedicated."

Lombard became a household name in the United Kingdom on the BBC series "The House of Eliott." She had a costarring role in the movie "Hidalgo."

On "CSI," Lombard plays a crime-scene investigator demoted to work on the graveyard shift with star **William B. Davis**.

"She's not a scientist by instinct," Lombard, 34, told TV Guide for its Dec. 26 issue. "She's a cop. Her interest is in justice."

Still, Lombard hasn't been able to avoid the grimmer tasks of her pseudo-job. In her first scene, she inspects a pool of vomit, and it didn't get any better.

"The next shot was me putting my hand down a toilet," she said. "I've waited my whole career to do that."

Bulking up for big roles

Renée Zellweger isn't the only actress packing on the pounds for plum roles these days.

Sarah Steele, the 16-year-old actress who plays the overweight daughter of **Adam Sandler** and **Tea Leoni** in the comedy-drama "Spanish," had to gain between 15 and 17 pounds for the role.

"And then I had my fat suit. It was cotton and spandex. It was pretty uncomfortable," the 5-foot-tall Steele told the Los Angeles Times for Sunday's edition.

Steele normally fluctuates between a size 1 and 2. She said she did not use a special diet to gain the weight because the food on the set was so good.

"I was the only actress who could eat it," she said.

Drug companies dodging Moore

Some pharmaceutical companies are telling their employees to look out for the scruffy guy in the baseball cap. The Houston Chronicle reported Saturday that at least six drug companies have issued internal communications telling employees to be wary of filmmaker **Michael Moore**.

Moore's targets have included General Motors ("Roger & Me"), the gun lobby (the Oscar-winning "Bowling for Columbine") and President Bush ("Fahrenheit 9/11").

Moore, normally seen sporting a beard and a ball cap, has now set his sights on the health care industry, including insurance companies, HMOs, the Food and Drug Administration and drug companies.

"We ran a story in our online newspaper saying Moore is embarking on a documentary and if you see a scruffy guy in a baseball cap, you'll know who it is," said **Robert Lederer**, a spokesman for Pfizer Global Research and Development.

In September and October, Wyeth, AstraZeneca and GlaxoSmithKline, the second-largest in retail sales, sent out Moore alerts, instructing employees that questions posed by the media or filmmakers should be handled by corporate communications.

Former Raider back in trouble

Former pro football center **Barret Robbins** was arrested on battery and drunk and disorderly conduct charges after he allegedly hit a night club security guard, authorities said.

The former Oakland Raider and Pro Bowler allegedly struck a guard after he was told the bar he was trying to enter was closed, according to the San Francisco Sheriff's Department. He was arrested around Friday morning.

The All-Pro center is best remembered for his infamous disappearance the night before the 2003 Super Bowl in San Diego. He spent Super Bowl Sunday in a hospital and later acknowledged he stopped taking his medicine for depression and bipolar disorder.

From The Associated Press

It's all about getting in THE GAME

Video games become crucial medium for musical success

BY JOSE ANTONIO VARGAS
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON

The Game — aka Jayceon Taylor — isn't a star. Not yet, at least. But it helps that big-shot producer **Dr. Dre** is on his side, working on the Game's debut album, set to drop in mid-January.

To break into the sardine-can hip-hop scene, the Game needs to tour, hit the FM waves, make the rounds on MTV.

One more thing: "It'd be really, really hot to get on Madden," the 25-year-old MC says from a recording studio in California's San Fernando Valley.

He's talking about the most lucrative franchise in the multibillion-dollar video game industry, selling more than 40 million units since its launch in 1989. "Madden NFL 2004" was last year's top-selling game, and "Madden NFL 2005" is poised to be near the top again this year.

The competition to get onto the game's soundtrack — a lineup of thumping, furious, go-play-ball songs — is fierce. Last year, record labels sent more than 2,500 songs to vie for the game's 21 tracks, which included Hoobastank's "Same Direction," New Found Glory's "This Disaster" and Yung Wu's "Yung Wu Anthem."

In the past three years, particularly this year, the link between the music industry and the video-game industry — the former in a revenue slump, the latter on a revenue high — has gotten only closer.

For example, the rock-punk band Incubus wrote music for "Halo 2," and Snoop Dogg's cover of the Doors classic "Riders on the Storm" made its debut on "Need for Speed Underground 2." Both games were released last month.

For artists as established as Green Day, whose "American Idiot" has just been nominated for a Grammy as record of the year, winning a spot on a Madden soundtrack is like having a 20-second commercial on "Monday Night

Football" or "Desperate Housewives." For an up-and-comer such as the Game, it's an even bigger deal, the kind of break that brings instant celebrity. For both, it's a new route to an old audience, as sure a bet as any when it comes to grabbing a prized demographic: 18-to-34-year-old males, 75 percent of whom play video games, according to Nielsen Interactive Entertainment.

"I play Madden, like, 30 hours or 40 hours a week, easy," said Nick Schwartz, 24. The Washington software technician says he first heard the song "American Idiot" on "Madden NFL 2005," not on the radio or MTV. The song is also the title of Green Day's latest album, which scored six Grammy nominations.

Justin Yu, a friend of Schwartz's, the 27-year-old Web designer, a "huge basketball fanatic," says he discovered the rapper Fabolous two years ago, on "NBA Live 2003." With his busy work schedule, "playing basketball means taking out the PlayStation."

In the past five years, that 18-to-34 male demographic has been increasingly turning on the television not to watch a show but to play video games, says Michael Dowling, general manager of Nielsen Interactive.

"Music in video game soundtracks has become a place for retro-classics, to hear new artists and for exciting artists to stretch and do different

kinds of material," said Casey Patterson of the MTV spinoff Spike TV, the self-described first network for men. On Nov. 30 Spike TV, with Artemis Records, released a compilation CD, "Hits Vol. 1: Best of Video Game Music," and recently held its second annual Video Game Awards.

Snoop Dogg, a big game himself, hosted. The convergence of music and video games is inevitable to Cary Sherman, president of the Recording Industry Association of America.

"There's been more of an effort in the past year by video game companies and record companies to find a match and create a game that's bigger than the sum of its parts. It's great for the video game. It's great for the artist," he said.



Jayceon Taylor, aka the Game, has his sights set on getting one of his songs on the next installment of the Madden football franchise.

AP photos



Snoop Dogg, center, performs his host duties at Spike TV's Video Game Awards on Dec. 14 in Santa Monica, Calif.

Horoscope

Venus runs out ahead of Mercury, and our hearts take the lead over our logical brain. So if you already know you have a tendency to hold a grudge for love, this is the time to ask friends what they honestly think — before you make any rash decisions. On the brighter side, if you've been finding it hard to forgive someone, compassion wins out.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 28)

You've got head-turning style this year — that, along with your creativity and hard work, will get you far reviews. Don't let it go to your head, however, particularly in April, when opportunity springs from humility. Your larger-than-life intensity attracts love that is the same in June. Be thrifty, and you'll have a good deal to spend in September.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

Sweet harmony guides your day as you reach an accord with your wife, your mother or a maternal figure and go to your neutral corners. Now, you can be super-productive and whip through that to-do list.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Have a chat with the gardener, the hatter or someone else who grooms you or your home — but wait until after noon. You'll be better able to articulate your needs, and that person will be more receptive to your suggestions.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Every song on the radio will seem to speak directly to you. This is a prolific time for Gemini poets, songwriters and romantics. Words of love roll easily off the tongue — or out of the pen if you prefer.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

There is a light at the end of this tunnel! You feel a surge of confidence as you glimpse it. Any unfinished business can be completed. Messes can be cleaned up. You're capable of more than you previously thought.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

The drama increases on your life stage, and you may feel as if you're flying

without a net. Rest assured that a stabilizing force will protect you from any rough landings. The universe has got your back.

VRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You're liable to be a bit irked by someone, particularly if that person throws your daily routine out of whack. Stall for time. If you still feel the same way in a couple of hours, share your concerns.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Use your natural sense of fair play to mediate a discussion between folks taking pro and con positions. You'll come out looking like a hero as long as you stay neutral. Another Libra helps.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

Others are drawn to you by your passion and mystery, but be careful of their motives. Your intuition is in high gear right now, so if something feels fishy, make a call to your gut, and go with whatever it has to say.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Passion is on the menu, as is a taste for telling it like it is. You express your affection with flair and wit. Teachers, lawyers and politicians can win over the other side by making their case with enthusiasm.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Your family is your strength, and you are theirs. Reminiscing about the past fills your heart with tenderness and love. A nice dinner can do wonders for your spirit. Include at least two of your favorite comfort foods.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Social butterfly that you are, you're probably spreading yourself too thin. You're torn between focusing on your own needs and keeping a commitment you made to a friend. Step in late tomorrow if you possibly can.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

The focus is still on your relationship, but now, the perspective has shifted from your partner to you. You're a natural-born negotiator, so say what you really feel and try to find common ground. It's closer than you realize.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



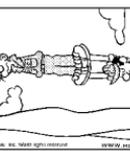
Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



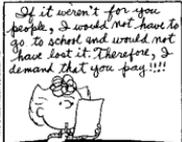
Red Rover



Better or Worse



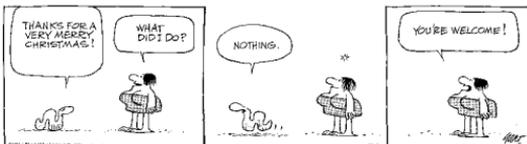
Peanuts



Fox Trot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

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Across

- 1 Chatters away
- 5 Unclear image
- 9 Clothing protector
- 12 Jai —
- 13 Croupier's prop
- 14 A Gabor sister
- 15 Bought with borrowed money
- 17 Doggy doc
- 18 Collections
- 19 Skin
- 21 Mails
- 24 Needy
- 25 Notion
- 26 1977 movie hit
- 30 Thanksgiving abbr.
- 31 Knew how to
- 32 Evicerate
- 33 Gilitch makers
- 35 Gambling game
- 36 Bar
- 37 Tailor further
- 38 Open area in a forest
- 40 China-Russia border river
- 42 Throw your hat into the ring
- 43 Raven's call
- 48 Easy as —
- 49 Hamletonian gait
- 50 Pedestal occupant
- 51 Spilt-down

Down

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Answer to Previous Puzzle

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B	I	G	F	O	O	T	W	A	V	E
				H	A	W	N	P	I	X
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E	N	D	S	G	E	N	S	C	A	N

12-28 CRYPTOQUIP

O CAXYOIAB ZUXZ QJHJLA
 ZAXDUOLV X YXHXIA
 DYXQ HOVU GA DXYAB
 X YXGJC YAXBAC.
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: IF YOU'RE SELLING CHRISTMAS TREES, YOU MIGHT TRY AND GET YOURSELF ALL SPRUCED UP.
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: Q equals S

Little privacy in hospital gowns

Dear Abby: In reply to the letter from "Offended in the South," regarding hospital gowns, I understand a person's need for modesty. However, I am a health-care provider, and I see the other side of the picture.

As a paramedic, we are constantly disrobing patients (including cutting clothing off) to gain access to areas that need examination and treatment. Hospital gowns give us access to IV lines, EKG monitoring, and defibrillation and other medical equipment.

I am always conscious of my patients' need for privacy and re-cover them after I have examined them. Hospitals do provide robes for patients that will cover their backsides.

I encourage all hospital patients to request a robe besides the hospital gown they receive upon admission.

—**Khrysten, Port Edwards, Wis.**
Dear Khrysten: I'm sure many readers will be interested to know that such garments are available upon request. Read on:

Dear Abby



Dear Abby: Some years back, I was in a hospital that offered a unique hospital gown. It was extremely large and had three sleeves. The patient put the left sleeve over the left arm, the right sleeve over the right arm, and then the gown was passed around the back, and the third sleeve placed over the left arm again. I remember my entire body was covered and I was very comfortable. I wish I could recall the name of that hospital.

—**H.E. in Florida**

Dear H.E.: It's nice to know that such a garment exists, but

how practical can it be for examinations or other emergency procedures?

Dear Abby: Five years ago, I had the same complaint as "Offended." I am 6 feet tall and weighed 225 pounds. For years I complained to the doctors about the fact that the gowns were so short. Finally, I went to the fabric store and bought two yards of fabric and a pattern for a wrap-around sundress. The total cost was \$12.95. I made it long — about 8 inches below my knee — and carried it with me in a tote bag.

—**Marce in Houston**

Dear Marce: That's a practical solution for a person who's handy with a needle — the sewing kind, that is.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the internet at <http://www.uspspress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

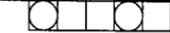
JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

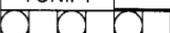
NACAL



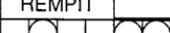
FOOLI



YONIFT



REMPIT



Answer: A A A A

Yesterday's Jumbles: KNAVE DITTY GAITY SPONGE

Answer: What the codd concentrated on in history class — GETTING "DATES"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(ANSWERS TOMORROW)

Move stressful, but give it a chance

Dear Annie: I have been married for 25 years and love my husband dearly. Three months ago, "Nelson" was offered a good job in Maryland. However, it meant we had to move five hours from my children and grandchildren, and it is tearing me apart. I thought I would be able to handle the distance, but I can't. My daughter is now separated from her husband, and I feel I should be there for her and the children. My husband has said that if I am so unhappy, he will give up the job and we will move back. But, Annie, I know that he is enjoying his new position, and I don't want to make him move.

I am depressed. I cry a lot. I have gotten a job in a large office, but still am lonely for my family and friends. I said I would give it a year, but it is so much harder than I thought.

—**My Heart is in New York**
Dear N.Y.: Of course it's hard to move away from the home you've known and the family you

Annie's Mailbox



cherish. Moving is highly stressful under the best of circumstances. However, you need to give Maryland a chance.

Maryland is not far away from New York. Can you save up mileage so you can visit your daughter perhaps one weekend a month (more often if you can afford it)? Have you joined a church or synagogue where you can become involved in its activities? Does your new apartment, condo or neighborhood have a social committee? These efforts will provide a distraction from your unhappiness and allow you to make new friends. Please hang in there a little longer before giving up.

Dear Annie: I was raised not to make noise when I eat. I don't smack, crunch or chew with my mouth open.

I really some foods make noise, like crackers or cucumbers, but in my group of friends,

there is a woman who crunches the ice in her drink. This is like nails on a blackboard to the rest of us. The subject has been brought to her attention, but she told us in no uncertain terms that she liked to crunch ice and doesn't plan to stop.

We realize this is not an earth-shaking problem, just an annoying one. Now what do we do, other than dissolve the group get-together, which we really don't want to do? Ear plugs?

—**Deafened in South Carolina**
Dear S.C.: Your friend may have an iron deficiency. One of the symptoms is the desire to crunch ice. Really. Tell her you are worried about her health and suggest she talk to her doctor. Beyond that, there's not much you can do to dissuade her from crunching. If she is too inconsiderate to stop when asked, you might want to including her in these outings.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

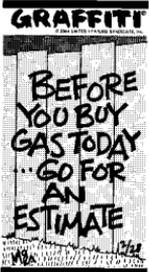
Family Circus



12-28

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"Br! I wouldn't want to live in Celsius!"



Dennis the Menace



"Yeah, Mom really loved your gift, but not as much as what she exchanged it for."

The Far Side © Gary Larson



"Varmints! ... You're all just a bunch of cheating 'varmint'!"

Non Sequiter



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Swiss defeat Belarus 5-0 in Jr. hockey

The Associated Press

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — Kevin Romy scored twice and Michael Tobler made 19 saves to help Switzerland defeat Belarus 5-0 on Sunday in its opening game of the World Junior Hockey Championship.

Tobler made four difficult saves in the first five minutes as Belarus controlled play, but Switzerland took a 1-0 lead in the first period on Roman Wick's wrap-around goal.

"Getting the lead was very important because they (Belarus) had already played a game and you usually have the most difficulty in your first game," Switzerland coach Jakob Kolliker said. "Our goal had good positioning and he stayed cool."

In the second period, Romy scored a short-handed goal, and Victor Stancescu and Marco Kasar also scored to give Switzerland a 4-0 lead.

Romy's second goal was the only score of the third period.

Stepan Gorjachevskiki made 32 saves for Belarus (0-2).

"We would never think that we could have such a bad game," Belarus assistant coach Aliaxsei Shehebaniou said.

Switzerland plays the United States (1-0) on Monday.

Linus Persson and Johannes Salomonson scored two goals each as Sweden opened the tournament with a 6-1 win over Germany in the Thiel River Falls, Minn.

Carl Soderberg and Elias Granat also scored, and Christopher Heino-Lindberg made 25 saves for Sweden. Thomas Greiss made 31 saves for Germany (0-2).

Beltran, Steinbrenner have a chat

The Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Carlos Beltran was impressed by George Steinbrenner after meeting with the New York Yankees owner earlier in the week, and told a newspaper in Puerto Rico that he would not be intimidated by playing in New York.

The free-agent All-Star center fielder who led the Houston Astros within one victory of their first World Series berth, talked with Steinbrenner in Tampa, Fla., on Tuesday.

"The meeting with Steinbrenner was very good," Beltran said in a story published in Friday's edition of *Primera Hora* newspaper.

"He is a professional person, super-educated. I've let them know my interest, and they have interest, too, about me joining their team."

"The Yankees — and Astros — clearly will have some competition in the race for the prized outfielder. Beltran said the New York Mets, Detroit Tigers and Chicago Cubs have also shown interest."

"The Mets have been very aggressive," he said. "So far, they haven't made any offers. I think we'll have a meeting very soon to talk personally."

No meeting with the Mets is scheduled, but one will probably take place the week of Jan. 3.

Beltran thinks he would be prepared to play in a high-profile baseball environment, such as New York.

"In all the places, when you do something good, the people applaud you. When you do something bad, they boo you," he said.



Sidney Ponson

"That happens in all the big league parks."

The All-Star outfielder batted .417 in the NL championship series for the Astros with four home runs, five RBIs and four stolen bases after hitting .455 with four homers and nine RBIs in the division series. If Houston doesn't reach an agreement by Jan. 8, the Astros would be ineligible to re-sign him until May 1.

Orlones' Ponson detained

ORANJESTAD, Aruba — Baltimore pitcher Sidney Ponson has been detained on suspicion of assaulting a judge at a beach on Christmas, police said Sunday.

Ponson, who was born in Aruba, was expected to be arraigned Monday on assault and battery charges, police spokesman Edwin Comencencia said.

Ponson's lawyer, Chris Lejeuz, didn't return calls seeking comment.

On Saturday at a beach in Boca Catalina, several people confronted Ponson, accusing him of harassing them with his personal watercraft and operating it recklessly, police said.

The 28-year-old right-hander allegedly struck one of the men in the group several times, police said. The man was later identified as a judge, Comencencia said.

The judge was hospitalized but his condition was not known, authorities said. Ponson left the scene but police detained him late Saturday, police said. He was being held at a jail in the community of San Nicolas.

Ponson went 11-15 with a 5.30 ERA in 33 starts last season. He has a 69-80 career record in seven seasons with a 4.67 ERA and 802 strikeouts.

In 2003, he was decorated in his homeland as a Knight in the Order of the Dutch Royal House.

Millwood, Tribe near deal?

CLEVELAND — Free agent right-hander Kevin Millwood is working toward agreement on a one-year contract with the Cleveland Indians, baseball sources told the Associated Press on Sunday.

Millwood was to arrive in Cleveland on Monday for a physical, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

There were still several details to work through before a contract can be finalized. "This is still a 50-50 proposition, at best," one of the sources said.

The sides are still negotiating the eventual structure of the contract, which is believed to be around \$7 million.

Millwood, 30, went 9-6 with a 4.86 ERA in 25 starts for Philadelphia last season. However, he

made only two starts in September after spraining a ligament and tendon in his pitching elbow. Millwood's injury appears to be the main reason why teams have not pursued the eight-year veteran more aggressively this winter.

Peretz, Mets to meet

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic — Free-agent pitcher Odalis Perez will meet with New York Mets general manager Omar Minaya later this week, the lefty said Monday.

Perez said they'll get together here Tuesday or Wednesday.

"My agent, Fernando Cuza, informed me that Minaya is coming to the Dominican Republic to talk to me personally. After that conversation, I will have a more clear picture about my immediate future in the major leagues," Perez told The Associated Press.

Perez, 27, was 7-6 with a 3.25 ERA in 31 starts for Los Angeles last season. He is 45-43 with a 4.00 ERA in six seasons with the Atlanta Braves and Los Angeles.

Ex-Blue Jay Ault dies at 54

TORONTO — Doug Ault, who hit two home runs in the first game in Toronto Blue Jays history in 1977, has died at 54.

He died at his home in Toronto Springs, Fla., a few miles from the Blue Jays' spring training quarters in Dunedin, the team said Monday. The club provided no further details about his death.

With a snow storm in Toronto and a cold wind blowing off Lake Ontario, Ault homered twice off Chicago's Ken Brett in the Blue Jays' 9-6 victory over the White Sox on April 7, 1977.

Ault, a first baseman, hit 17 homers during his four years in the majors. His career average was .236 in 256 games.

Texas AD says a new contract in the works for Mack Brown

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — With Texas preparing for its first Rose Bowl appearance, university officials are working up a new contract with a raise for coach Mack Brown.

"We like what we've got," Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds told the Associated Press on Monday. "He's done a wonderful job with the program."

Dodds said details would be announced later in the contract but Brown would get a raise on a salary that currently pays him slightly more than \$2 million per year. He is one of the highest-paid coaches in college football. Brown's assistants also could get raises.

Although Brown has been criticized for a five-year losing streak to Big 12 South archrival Oklahoma, Texas (10-1) has won at least 10 games each of the last four seasons and has become a regular fixture as a top 10 team in the Associated Press rankings during his seven-year tenure.

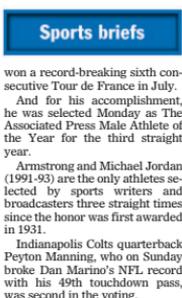
The Rose Bowl will also be Texas' first appearance in a Bowl Championship Series game. The Champions meet No. 13 Michigan (9-2) on Jan. 1.



Mack Brown

Armstrong chosen AP Male Athlete of the Year

AUSTIN, Texas — Already recognized as one of the truly inspiring athletes of his generation for his comeback against cancer, Lance Armstrong took his cycling legacy a step further when he



Michael Jordan

Sports briefs

won a record-breaking sixth consecutive Tour de France in July.

And for his accomplishment, he was selected Monday as The Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year for the third straight year.

Armstrong and Michael Jordan (1991-93) are the only athletes selected by sports writers and broadcasters three straight times since the honor is first awarded in 1931.

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning, who on Sunday broke Dan Marino's NFL record with his 49th touchdown pass, was second in the voting.

But as dominant as Armstrong was in France, he has yet to commit to going for a seventh title next year. He promises to race again in the Tour de France before he retires, but won't say if it will be next year or 2006.

Armstrong says he's ready to pursue other challenges in racing.

He has dedicated most of his cy-

cling life to the Tour, leaving little room for such classics as the Spanish Vuelta, Paris-Roubaix or the Fleche Wallone, which he won in 1996 shortly before being diagnosed with testicular cancer.

But he also knows that it's the Tour de France his American fans want to see him win.

"I could win the Tour of Flanders and I wouldn't win AP Athlete of the Year," he said.

Miller, Rahives 2-3

BORMIO, Italy — Overall World Cup leader Bode Miller and U.S. teammate Daron Rahives finished second and third Monday during downhill training on a course that will host the world championships.

Olympic gold medalist Fritz Strobl of Austria was fastest in the first training session for Wednesday's World Cup race. He covered the 1.8-mile Stevio run out, which was softened by recent snow, in 1 minute, 53.22 seconds. Miller was 1.19 seconds behind and Rahives was 1.23 back.

Miller, 24, has 108 points lead on Austria's Benjamin Raich in the overall standings. He also leads the downhill rankings and

is aiming for his third downhill victory this season. Austria's Hermann Maier, the overall, won 21st Monday and Raich was 35th.

The worlds will be held at Bormio — and nearby Santa Caterina for the women's events — from Jan. 28 to Feb. 13.

Ex-Pats TE Coates hired

SALISBURY, N.C. — Ben Coates, a Pro Bowl tight end with the New England Patriots, has been hired as football coach at his alma mater, tiny Livingston College in North Carolina.

Coates played in two Super Bowls with the Patriots — losing with the Patriots in 1996 and winning with Baltimore in 2001.

He succeeds George Johnson Jr., who went 8-22 in three seasons, including 2-8 in 2004. Coates had been an assistant at Livingston, a historically black college in Salisbury, N.C., since 2001.

Coates had coaching internships with the Dallas Cowboys and the Frankfurt Galaxy of NFL Europe.

In 1994, Coates set a reception record for tight ends with 96 catches. He retired with 499 career receptions after 5,555 yards.

Nash has done what straight win

Suns guard breaks Magic Johnson's record set in 1986-87 season

The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Steve Nash is fitting in perfectly with his new Phoenix teammates.

Nash became the first NBA player to assist on 10 or more baskets in 11 consecutive victories, finishing with 13 in the Suns' 106-94 victory over Toronto on Sunday night. Nash broke the mark of 10 games, set twice by Magic Johnson in the 1986-87 season.

"It is kind of embarrassing in a way," said Nash, who scored 18 points. "He's one of the greatest players ever to play the game, and to be mentioned with him is a big thrill and honor. But in no stretch am I Magic."

Nash, who left Dallas during the offseason to sign with the Suns, had three assists and Amare Stoudemire scored six of his 33 points during a 12-0 fourth-quarter run after the Raptors had erased a 20-point lead.

"We kind of took it easy for a couple of minutes," Stoudemire said. "We can do that. But we were able to close it out."

The Suns have won four of their last 21 games to improve to 24-3. After falling behind 59-39 early in the third, Toronto fought back with some help from its reserves. Jalen Rose, Lamond Murray and Matt Bonner had key baskets to help the Raptors tie it 80-80 with 8:38 left.

"We always play hard when we get down 20," Toronto coach Sam Mitchell said. "You can't keep getting down 20 minutes. You have to get on the offense and be embarrassed to start the game. For whatever reason, we get down 20, our pride is challenged and we play hard."

During the Suns' latest winning streak, there have been 10 more assists this season — they have scored at least 100 points in

NBA roundup

every game, with Sunday's 106 points their lowest total during the stretch. The last time Phoenix won 11 straight was March 20-April 10, 1997. The 11 consecutive victories ties Miami for the longest streak since the season.

Warriors 98, Kings 94: At Sacramento, Calif., Jason Richardson scored all 26 of his points in the second half to lead Golden State past Sacramento.

The Warriors snapped an 11-game losing streak in Sacramento and won for the second time in 22 games there, dating back to April 9, 1999. Troy Murphy had 19 points and 13 rebounds for the Warriors, who had lost four of five games and are 3-10 on the road this season.

Cliff Robinson added 11 points and Speedy Claxton had 10 points and nine assists.

Chris Webber scored 28 points for Sacramento, which expected a horrible homecoming by its standards, finishing 2-3. Peja Stojakovic had 18 points, Mike Bibby 14 and Doug Christie and Maurice Evans 13 each.

The Kings scored seven straight points in the fourth quarter to cut a 10-point deficit to 91-88, but Richardson responded with a long jumper and two free throws, putting Golden State ahead 95-89 with 22 seconds left.

Webber made two three-pointers in the final minute, the second one pulling the Kings within 90-84 with 1:04 left. Richardson followed with a free throw with 7.1 seconds left and the Kings missed a three-pointer as time expired.

Cavaliers 100, Hornets 91: At Cleveland, LeBron James had 22 points, 14 as-

sists and nine rebounds for the Cavaliers. Drew Gooden had 18 points and 18 rebounds and Jeff McInnis added 16 points and 10 assists to help Cleveland improve to 11-2 at home.

Lee Nailon scored 18 points for New Orleans.

Spurs 107, Celtics 90: At San Antonio, Tracy Parker scored 21 season-high points and Tim Duncan had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Spurs.

Ricky Davis led Boston with 21 points on 10-of-18 shooting.

Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88: At Denver, Dirk Nowitzki scored 23 of his 36 points in the second half to help Dallas rally past Denver.

Denver's without leading scorer Carmelo Anthony for the fourth straight game because of a sprained ankle. Andre Miller led the Nuggets with 18 points.

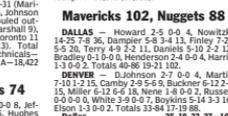
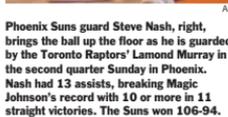
New York, Bobcats 82: At New York, Tim Thomas scored 20 points to lead five New York starters in double figures. Emeka Okafor had 23 points and 15 rebounds for the Bobcats for his 15th straight home win.

Rockets 96, Clippers 79: At Houston, Tracy McGrady and Jim Jackson each scored 21 points to help Houston win for the seventh time in 10 games.

Yao Ming had 20 points and 11 rebounds for his third straight double-double and team-high 11th of the season. Corey Magette scored 23 points for the Clippers.

Timberwolves 109, Wizards 74: At Minneapolis, Wally Szczerbiak scored 23 points to lead Minnesota to its 11th straight win at home. Dennis Ahrens scored 21 points for Washington.

Bucks 99, Bulls 92: At Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored 20 of his season-high 39 points in the first quarter and the Bucks snapped a four-game losing streak. Ben Gordon had 19 points for Chicago.



Phoenix Suns guard Steve Nash, right, brings the ball up the floor as he is guarded by the Toronto Raptors' Lamond Murray in the second quarter Sunday in Phoenix. Nash had 13 assists, breaking Magic Johnson's record with 10 or more in 11 straight victories. The Suns won 106-94.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
New York	13	20	0.395
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Philadelphia	11	16	30
New Jersey	9	26	44
Orlando	10	24	36 1/2

Southeast Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	10	25	28 1/2
Orlando	15	10	5
Washington	12	13	20
Charlotte	7	30	32
Atlanta	10	26	34 1/2

Central Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	16	11	59.3
Indiana	13	18	42
Chicago	12	18	40
Memphis	12	17	41.3
Milwaukee	7	36	37 1/2

Western Conference

Southwest Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	22	6	78.6
Dallas	18	10	64.3
Houston	12	14	46
Memphis	12	14	46

Northwest Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	16	7	70.2
Minnesota	15	10	60
Portland	13	12	52
Denver	13	14	48.1
Utah	10	18	35.7

Pacific Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Phoenix	18	6	75
Sacramento	17	6	65
L.A. Lakers	14	13	51.9
Golden State	9	18	33.3

Sunday's games			
W	L	Pct	GB
New York 91, Charlotte 87			
Milwaukee 90, Chicago 82			
Cleveland 100, New Orleans 91			
Phoenix 106, Toronto 94			
Dallas 92, Denver 86			
Golden State 94, L.A. Clippers 79			

Tuesday's games			
W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland at Atlanta			
Houston at Milwaukee			
Phoenix at San Antonio			
New Jersey at Chicago			
Boston at Dallas			
Philadelphia at Lakers			

Sunday			
W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	7	30	32
Charlotte	7	30	32
Charlotte	7	30	32

Three-Point Goals			
Team	Points	Assists	Rebounds
Charlotte	13	22	32
Charlotte	13	22	32
Charlotte	13	22	32

Bucks 99, Bulls 92			
W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40

Chicago			
W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40

Chicago			
W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40

Chicago			
W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40
Chicago	12	18	40

Spurs 107, Celtics 90			
W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2

Spurs 107, Celtics 90			
W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2

Spurs 107, Celtics 90			
W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2

Spurs 107, Celtics 90			
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Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2

Spurs 107, Celtics 90			
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Boston	12	16	42 1/2
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Boston	12	16	42 1/2

Spurs 107, Celtics 90			
W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2

Spurs 107, Celtics 90			
W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2
Boston	12	16	42 1/2

L.A. Clippers			
W	L	Pct	GB
Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50

L.A. Clippers			
W	L	Pct	GB
Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50

L.A. Clippers			
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Clippers	20	20	50

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Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50

L.A. Clippers			
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Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50

L.A. Clippers			
W	L	Pct	GB
Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50
Clippers	20	20	50

Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88			
W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	25	0	100
Dallas	25	0	100
Dallas	25	0	100

Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88			
W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	25	0	100
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Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88			
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Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88			
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Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88			
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Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88			
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Mavericks 102, Nuggets 88			
W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	25	0	100
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Golden State			
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Golden State			
W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	25	0	100
Golden State	25	0	100
Golden State			

On high-speed skis, they fly like eagles

Racing overcomes the frustration of being confined to a wheelchair

By JOHN MARSHALL

The Associated Press

DENVER — Skiing is freedom to Joe Tompkins and Chris Devlin-Young, a chance to climb out of their wheelchairs and regain some of the self worth lost in accidents that swept away the use of their legs.

Personal fulfillment is only part of the joy. By racing a high-tech chair strapped to a ski at speeds up to 70 mph as part of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team, Tompkins and Devlin-Young are spreading a message of hope.

"The main reason we're in it is to touch other guys and show them that life isn't really over, like I thought it was for a few years," Devlin-Young said.

Like most members of the team, Tompkins and Devlin-Young use off days and breaks

“I got seven speeding tickets in one month and talked my way out of two others when I was drunk. I'm luckier to be alive from the two years after the disability than I am after the plane crash.”

Chris Devlin-Young

Disabled alpine skier

in their schedule to visit schools, hoping their stories can provide a lift to kids who are down or an inspiration to those who need a little nudge in the right direction.

Tompkins, of Juneau, Alaska, also is heavily involved in junior racing and constantly trying to recruit new skiers, hoping they can get the same joy from it that he does.

Devlin-Young offers advice and inspiration at every turn, working with instructors and coaches to give people with disabilities an outlet for their frustrations.

"They definitely enjoy what they do and they like to pass it on to other people," coach Kevin Jardine said.

"All the athletes on our team have different reasons for doing it, and Chris and Joe are old enough and mature enough and been involved in the sport long enough that they really enjoy that side of it. The fact that they have been through what they've been through and have such a positive attitude about it is really key," and they have been through a lot.

A surfer growing up in Santa Cruz, Calif., Devlin-Young was paralyzed, below the waist in 1982 when, while on a rescue mission with the Coast Guard, his plane crashed into a mountain in the Aleutian Islands. For two years, he grappled with feelings that he was half a man, raging and drinking to the point that he wondered if he'd see his next birthday.

"I got seven speeding tickets in one month and talked my way out of two others when I was drunk," said Devlin-Young, who now lives in Hampton, N.H. "I'm luckier to be alive from the two years after the disability than I am after the plane crash."

Convinced by a friend to check out a weeklong disabled veterans



Paralympic alpine skiers Chris Devlin-Young, left, of Compton, N.H., and Joe Tompkins of Juneau, Alaska, are involved in sports science testing and training at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs.

ski clinic, Devlin-Young figured he had nothing to lose. Now he's coming off the best of his 11 seasons and ready to make a run for a medal in the 2006 Paralympics at Turin, Italy.

"Right away, I got hooked to skiing, got hooked to racing and unhooked to being angry," Devlin-Young, who turns 43 on Sunday, said. "Skiing really changed my life. It gave me back adrenaline, it gave me back control of my life, over my parts that I'll never be able to control ever again."

Tompkins knows all about losing control.

He was injured in 1988 when, as a 19-year-old, he hopped into the front seat of a car being driven by a drunken friend. The driver crashed into a tree, killing one of the passengers and leaving Tompkins with a broken back and paralysis from the waist down.

Like Devlin-Young, he fell into depression, recklessly using drugs and alcohol to fight his inner demons. Skiing later became a way to break free of his wheelchair, but it was a pair of beaming eyes — those of his son, Donald, born a month before the accident — that made him realize life wasn't over.

"At 21, I took a look at my son and said, 'That boy is never going to catch anybody dad, besides me,'" Tompkins said. "And from then on I quit drinking and doing drugs and started to live my life again."

Tompkins, 36, got into skiing after a friend at a wheelchair basketball game asked if he had tried it. Though he was tentative for a few years after watching a friend's fatal crash into a tree, Tompkins won a World Cup race last year and was bumped up to the "A" team this season.

"If you've seen a bald eagle up there soaring around, just letting it go, that's exactly how I feel," Tompkins said of his first time out. "I felt like I was untouchable, I was just going to glide around that snow."

It's a feeling Tompkins and Devlin-Young believe everyone should experience, whether they're in a wheelchair or not. That's why they spend so much time promoting the sport they love.

"It's not just disabled people, it's people who start feeling down because they lose a girlfriend or a boyfriend, a husband or a wife or they're going through the 'poo-me' phase when they lose their house," Tompkins said. "Chris and I went through that same thing after our accidents for about two years and something finally clicked for both of us."

"We want it to click for other people, too."

Young's playmaking crucial to Texas' Rose hopes

By JIM VERTUO

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — With Texas trailing late against Kansas and needing 18 yards on fourth down to keep a rally alive, quarterback Vince Young made something happen.

Instead of hanging in the pocket to make the big throw, Young took off running. Twenty-two yards later, he had a first down, a key play in a comeback that ended with his touchdown pass to Tony Jefferson with 11 seconds left in a 27-23 victory.

Without Young's ability to improvise and stay calm under pressure, No. 6 Texas (10-1) wouldn't be playing No. 13 Michigan (9-2) in the Rose Bowl on Jan. 1.

"One of the great things about Vince Young is that he can beat you both ways," Texas coach Mack Brown said.

That's also why he's such a nightmare for a Michigan defense that has been exposed this season as weak against mobile quarterbacks.

"If you try to do it keep them (defenses) on edge knowing I'm going to run or pass," Young said. "I'm going to always go out there trying to be a defense's worst nightmare."

All of which leads to some fretful nights for Michigan coaches and players trying to figure how to stop him. Defensive pressure up front "hasn't been enough," Young made a lot of big plays when things go wrong in the pocket," Michigan coach Lloyd Carr said.

The Wolverines looked flat-footed in their last outing, as a 37-21 loss to Ohio State when Buckeyes quarterback Troy Smith ran and passed at will against a defense

that boasts two All-Americans in defensive backs Marlin Jackson and Ernest Shazor. Smith ran for 145 yards and passed for 241 yards and two TDs.

Now comes Young, who at 6-foot-5, 220 pounds, is a strong but fluid runner who is fast enough to outrun defenders and big enough to break tackles.

"He makes plays," Michigan linebacker Roy Manning said. "He has a great arm and can throw it over your head, throw it down the field while he's running. He's just an exceptional athlete." Young has run for 10 touchdowns while passing for 11. Longhorns tackle Justin Blalock said Young's big-play ability more than once left his teammates laughing at defenders he left flailing hopelessly behind.

"There's been a couple of times guys have looked just silly," Bla-

lock said. "That's bound to happen just about every game."

It wasn't all good all season. Young played his two worst games in consecutive weeks against Oklahoma and Missouri.

In a 12-0 loss to the Sooners, he committed a key fumble deep in Oklahoma territory in the first half. The next week, he was benched in the second half after throwing two early interceptions in a 28-20 victory over Missouri.

Despite the shaky games, Texas deliberately put the ball in Young's hands, calling plays designed for him to run from under center and out of the shotgun.

"He's one of the coolest dudes I've ever known," linebacker Aaron Harris said.

If Young has a weakness, it's as a passer, although he would dispute that. With an awkward throwing motion, Young tends to sidestep some of his passes, which can affect his accuracy.

Although Young has never wavered in his confidence through the ball, he struggled early to connect with a young group of receivers. The Longhorns rank just 105th nationally in passing at 164 yards per game, although Texas hasn't had to throw much considering it grinds out an average of 302 yards on the ground.

But there's little doubt Young is getting more comfortable in the pocket. In a 56-35 victory over Oklahoma State, he was 18-for-21 for 278 yards, passed for a TD and ran 42 yards for a score as Texas trailed from a 35-7 deficit.

Against Kansas, he passed for a career-high 289 yards and ran for 114.

Focused Patriots pummel N.Y. Jets

BY BARRY WILNER
The Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The New York Jets just don't measure up. Of course, not many teams do when they try using the New England Patriots as their propping ground.

With the Jets seeking a victory that would certify them as a Super Bowl contender and, not coincidentally, clinch a wild-card playoff berth, it was the Patriots who showed their championship qualities. New England dominated New York 23-7 Sunday, securing a first-round bye and showing the Jets (10-5) how far they are from the elite level of the NFL.

That's a level the Patriots (13-2) have been on for most of the last four seasons. They simply know how to win the biggest games.

"We were coming off a tough loss," Tom Brady said of a last-minute upset defeat at Miami in which he threw four interceptions. "It was a short week and the team was really intent on going out and playing our best."

"This is a team with a lot of mental toughness that battles and has a lot of strong character, and when you have that, you can feel proud at the end of the day."

They also can feel relieved, because the Patriots are settled in as the No. 2 seed in the AFC behind Pittsburgh. Not only is next week's game against San Francisco meaningless, but there will be a week off after that. New England has a banged-up secondary and star defensive end Richard Seymour injured his foot Sunday.

"A point of emphasis this week was getting a win and getting a bye," said safety Eugene Wilson, who had an interception.

The Jets wish they had such a luxury. After the Patriots defeated Chad Pennington into yet another mediocre effort in a critical game, New York must win at St. Louis in the season-ender to ensure it will be in the playoffs.

Since starting 5-0, the Jets are 5-5. All five of the Jets' defeats this year have been against teams with winning records: two to the Patriots and one each against Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Buffalo.

That's why the Jets accentuated the significance of a victory over the division-rival Pats — a win they never came close to getting.

"It's shocking because you have the feeling you're going to do a lot more," said wide receiver Santana Moss, who scored New York's touchdown on a 15-yard pass with 9:22 remaining. "You know what you can do and you go in confident. That's the disappointment that you have as a player when you know what you could have done, but you didn't do it."

There were many reasons the Jets couldn't do it, especially linebackers Tedy Bruschi (eight tackles, one interception) and Ted Johnson and strong safety Rodney Harrison. Bruschi held the league's leading rusher, Curtis Martin, to a season-low 33 yards.

Plus Brady (21-for-32 for 264 yards and two touchdowns) and wide receiver Deion Branch (10 catches for 82 yards and a TD)



New England Patriots defensive back Eugene Wilson (26) intercepts a pass intended for New York Jets wide receiver Wayne Cherebert.

and Corey Dillon, who rushed for 89 yards.

"We have guys all over the field who are capable of getting open and making plays," Brady said. "I'll take 23 points — and them with less than 23."

How about seven? Pennington, who started a firstrest last week when he berated reporters for suggesting that he flops in big games, struggled again. He threw two interceptions and lost a fumble while constantly overthrowing or underthrowing receivers.

He did it against an injury-ravaged secondary, too. "You could see frustration set in," Harrison said. "They were

looking at the DBs and saying, 'These are a bunch of replacements and we can't get it done.' There would be no collapse by the Patriots the way they fell apart last Monday night at Miami in a 29-28 defeat.

"Maybe it was a good thing it was a Monday night game, because it left us less time to think about it," Bruschi said. "We had to move right and we had to focus the right way and I think we did."

"I think we've been playing Patriots football, it's just the other guys have been making plays. Part of Patriots football is winning back and I think we did a good job of that tonight."

Ball bounces Lions' way against Bears

BY LARRY LAGE
The Associated Press

DETROIT — Andre Goodman didn't like Detroit's chances when a play he defended in the end zone was reviewed.

"You saw the replay," Goodman said. "You would be nervous, too."

Luckily for the Lions, the call and review went their way.

Chad Hutchinson appeared to throw a 43-yard, tying touchdown pass to Bernard Berrian with 1:26 left, but an incomplete ruling on the field stood after a review —

despite replays that appeared to show it should have been overruled — giving Detroit a 19-13 victory over the Chicago Bears on Sunday.

Referee Terry McAulay announced the ball was moving when Berrian hit the bubble.

"I didn't see him bubble it," said Goodman, who drafted Berrian. "I actually thought he caught it fair. I thought he had it, and had it the whole time."

Berrian did, too. "I caught the ball, got two feet in, hit the ground and that was it," Berrian said. "It was a touchdown. There's no doubt about it."

The Lions got a fortunate break a week after a botched extra point with 8 seconds left allowed Minnesota to beat Detroit 28-27.

Despite winning one more game than they did last year, the Lions (6-9) were subuded after nearly blowing a 16-0 lead late in the third quarter.

"When you play as poorly as we did in the second half, it just doesn't leave you with a great feeling," said Joey Harrington, who

was 15-for-30 for 166 yards with an interception.

Hutchinson was 20-for-35 for 114 yards with a TD and Thomas Jones ran for 109 yards for the Bears (5-10), who have dropped five of six.

Hutchinson said he should have been credited with two TD passes.

"When you cross the end zone, all you need is two feet in and the ball in your possession," he said. "Berrian had that. They said the ball moved, but you don't have to hold it still. That's not a call."

Kevin Jones went over the 1,000-yard mark, something only Barry Sanders and Billy Sims did as Detroit rookies, with 123 yards on 25 carries. "It's a great honor, because those are two of the best ever," Jones said.

Jones, who has 1,061 yards, scored on a 1-yard TD and went over the 100-yard mark for the fourth time. Sanders ran for 1,470 yards in 19 and Sims had 1,303 yards rushing in 1980 Detroit. Hutchinson scored on four straight drives in the first half for a 16-0 lead on Jones' TD and Jason Hanson's three field goals.

Linebacker Lance Briggs pulled the Bears to 16-6 late in the third quarter with an interception and 38-yard return. Hanson made his fourth field goal early in the fourth after Jones' fumble was overturned by replay.

Hutchinson capped a 90-yard drive with a 15-yard TD pass to Jason McKie to make it 19-13 with 7:04 to go.

The Bears got the ball back and, after converting a fourth-and-3 at midfield, Hutchinson seemed to connect with Berrian for a TD. It appeared Berrian caught the ball and got both feet in bounds at the side of the end zone, but the officials didn't see it that way.

After three more incomplete passes, Detroit escaped with a win.

"I thought it might have been a touchdown like you did," Lions coach Steve Mariucci said.

The Lions beat a team twice in the same season for the first time since 1988 and Chicago missed a chance to win at least one game against every team in the division for the first time since 1991.

Bills move step closer to playoffs

BY GREG BEACHAM
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The Buffalo Bills weren't sure whether Wayne McGabe could play until the moment he ran onto the field for their first huddle.

And that was about the extent of the suspense in the Bills' 41-7 victory on Sunday. McGabe's injured knee held up, the Buffalo defense throttled San Francisco's offense and the Bills boosted their playoff chances by handing the Niners their worst home loss since 1967.

"You might want to feel sorry for them, but in this business, you can't," Buffalo safety Lawyer Milloy said.

Coach Mike Milroy still won't say the word "playoffs," but with their sixth straight victory, his Bills (9-6) certainly are showing the determination and desperation necessary to become just the second team in NFL history to reach the postseason after starting 0-4.

"It's just another example of good team football," said Drew Bledsoe, who went 21-for-32 for 172 yards and a touchdown. "We had good special teams play, our defense shut them down, and offensively, it took us a quarter to get going, but we put up a bunch of points."

"It's good team football, and it's fun to be a part of."

Malarkey shut off every television in the locker room before the game, ordering the Bills to focus on the only game with playoff implications they could control. Though nothing was decided, the other games went exceptionally well for the Bills: Field contenders Baltimore, Jacksonville and the New York Jets all lost.

"Some of us know the situations, but the only thing we could control is what was right here," linebacker Takeo Spikes said. "We knew the problems [the 49ers] were having, and we wanted to beat them with our best game."

McGabe rushed for 102 yards and two touchdowns despite missing practice earlier in the week, and Lee Evans caught eight passes for 92 yards and two more scores as the Bills extended their longest winning streak since 1990. Buffalo also clinched its first winning record since 1999.

From Spikes' menacing tackles to Evans' impressive catches, the Bills haven't looked much better this season. Using a no-huddle offense and playing suffocating defense, they jumped to a 17-0 half-time lead and then they poured it on, forcing four turnovers and scoring almost at will.

The Bills also were able to rest McGabe and Bledsoe in anticipation of next week's big game against Pittsburgh. Backup quarterback Shaun Matthews played most of the second half, and Shaud Williams ran for 93 yards and a touchdown.

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WIN CASH!

Mondays in Stars and Stripes and on Oconus.com

NFL scoreboard

American Conference

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	13	0	0	.875	415	263
N.Y. Jets	10	6	0	.625	294	229
Buffalo	9	6	0	.600	375	318
M.A. Giants	8	8	0	.500	252	234
South						
x-Indianapolis	17	0	0	.880	518	288
Jacksonville	7	0	0	.533	248	247
Houston	7	0	0	.467	295	317
Tennessee	6	0	0	.429	267	411
North						
x-Pittsburgh	10	0	0	.933	343	227
Baltimore	8	0	0	.833	347	245
Cleveland	7	0	0	.783	347	245
Cleveland	3	10	0	.230	254	376
West						
x-San Diego	11	4	0	.733	422	296
Denver	9	0	0	.600	348	290
Kansas City	9	0	0	.600	348	290
Oakland	5	10	0	.333	313	429

National Conference

Team	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Philadelphia	10	0	0	.593	389	283
Dallas	6	0	0	.400	269	377
N.Y. Giants	6	0	0	.333	275	323
Washington	5	10	0	.333	219	347
East						
x-Atlanta	11	0	0	.733	314	209
Carolina	7	0	0	.467	337	318
New Orleans	7	0	0	.429	287	356
Tampa Bay	5	10	0	.333	294	362
West						
x-Green Bay	9	0	0	.600	393	266
Minn. Vikings	8	0	0	.533	377	314
Detroit	6	0	0	.429	337	362
Chicago	6	0	0	.333	317	300
West						
x-Seattle	8	0	0	.533	343	347
San Francisco	4	0	0	.263	257	366
Arizona	3	10	0	.233	272	315
San Diego	1	10	0	.133	252	413

NFL playoff games

AFC Conference

NFC Conference

Wild Card

Divisional

Championship

Super Bowl

Sunday's games

Monday's game

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Wednesday, Jan. 3

Thursday, Jan. 4

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Giants at a loss after streak grows to eight

By Joe Kay
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Something's not right with the New York Giants.

Maybe it's the chemistry. Maybe it's the coaching. Maybe it's the rookie quarterback's growing pains.

Or, maybe it's a little bit of all three, coupled with some plain old bad luck.

The Giants walked off the field numbed by the cold and their eighth straight loss Sunday, one that was the most improbable of all in a dismal season. Jon Kitna's 4-yard touchdown pass to Chad Johnson with 44 seconds left gave the Cincinnati Bengals a 23-22 victory over a team that's at a loss to explain itself.

"We've got to get some things solved in the locker room," cornerback Will Peterson said. "There has to be a problem, if we keep losing close games like this. There's got to be something about the mentality and the attitude, something intangibles."

The Giants (5-10) haven't won since Oct. 31, a slide that has something to do with the switch to rookie Eli Manning at quarterback. The first overall pick in the draft struggled in his first four starts, but has started getting together in the last two.

He had the best game of his career in a 33-30 loss to Pittsburgh, then avoided the game-turning mistake until his final pass against the Bengals. Needing to go about 20 yards to get in range for a field-goal attempt by Steve Christie, Manning tried to thread a pass to tight end Jeremy Shockey.

Robert Geathers got his hand on the ball and deflected it to fellow lineman Carl Powell for the clinching interception.

"There's no way you can

blame anyone on that," said Manning, who was 19-for-37 for a career-high 201 yards. "It's just their guy having his hand in the right spot."

In the last two minutes, the Giants (7-8) had everything go their way.

New York led 22-17 after Christie's fifth field goal with 15:51 remaining. The Giants got the ball back with a chance to drain the clock, but managed only one first down and had to punt.

Keivan Ratliff had a lot of room, and ran it back 42 yards to the Giants' 24-yard line. The play turned the momentum.

"I just looked at it and knew I was going to have some room after I made the catch," Ratliff said.

Jon Kitna had another up-and-down day filling in for the injured Carson Palmer. After Ratliff's return, Kitna missed a 40-yard pass, if passes, leaving the Bengals in a 4th-and-10. Seeing no one open, he lobbed a pass for T.J. Houshmandzadeh to go up and get.

The receiver outpumped two defenders and held on at the 5-yard line. One play later, Kitna put the Bengals ahead with his second touchdown pass to Johnson.

"On four straight plays, they had the perfect coverage, called for the plays we ran," said Kitna, who was 20-for-30 for 186 yards with an interception.

The Giants had a chance to pull it out, but the tipped interception left them once again looking back on their numerous mistakes.

"That is one of the most bizarre games I've ever seen in my life," coach Tom Coughlin said. "There's no explanation for why a play after play after play with opportunities, we can't make a play."

Steelers clinch home field

By Alan Robinson
The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Tommy Maddox could start the Pittsburgh Steelers' first and last regular-season games. What Ben Roethlisberger did in between guarantees they won't leave home during the AFC playoffs as long as they keep winning.

Roethlisberger didn't play a full game for the first time since becoming a starter, but threw two touchdown passes in a 20-7 victory Sunday over Baltimore that left the Steelers on the brink of the best regular season in franchise history.

Roethlisberger was pulled for precautionary reasons with an unspecified rib injury early in the fourth quarter, not long after Terrell Suggs slammed him to the turf during a 2-yard touchdown pass to Jerome Tuman.

The injury didn't appear serious — Roethlisberger completed two passes on Pittsburgh's next possession before Maddox took over.

Because the Steelers (14-1) won't play another meaningful game for three weeks, it seems unlikely they would risk playing Roethlisberger on Sunday in Buffalo.

His teammates are certain he will be ready for their first playoff game Jan. 15 or 16.

"Ben is a tough guy," Jerome Bettis said. "I am not worried about the guy. He wanted to keep going. I really think they stepped him from going on. He's a competitor."

What the Steelers find remarkable is they secured home-field advantage before Week 17 during one of the most competitive AFC seasons ever. No rookie quarterback has taken his team to the



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) gets off a pass under pressure from Baltimore Ravens' Terrell Suggs (5) on Sunday.

Super Bowl, yet it wouldn't surprise the Steelers if Roethlisberger — 13-0 as an NFL starter — does exactly that.

"He's just a lot more comfortable," offensive coordinator Ken Whisenand said after Roethlisberger went 14-for-19 for 221 yards and one interception. "The timing of his throws is much better, and that only helps the running game."

The Ravens (8-7), their own playoff hopes now all but gone, never did figure out what the Steelers were doing.

"It's tough, it really is," said quarterback Kyle Boller, who drove the Ravens to the Steelers 35 three times without coming away with any points. "It's losing."

Roethlisberger was 3-for-3 as the Steelers needed only five plays to drive 80 yards on an opening possession finished off by his 36-yard touchdown pass to Plexico Burress, who was coming off a four-game injury layoff.

But Roethlisberger threw only twice during a 14-play, 71-yard drive to open the second half, with Jerome Bettis and Verron Haynes combining for 12 consecutive runs ahead of the rookie's scoring pass to Tuman that made it 17-7. Bettis gained 117 yards in his sixth 100-yard game in six starts for the injured Duce Staley (hamstring).

Suggs was penalized for roughing Roethlisberger but, despite the acrimony that often exists between the two AFC North rivals, there were no incidents the rest of the game. Maybe it's because the Steelers were in such control they didn't want to risk motivating an opponent that seemed worn down and beaten following the 8½-minute drive.

The Ravens talked of taking a playoff-like intensity into the game, but it didn't show up.

"You've got to respond better than that in those circumstances," coach Brian Billicek said.

Texans earn first shutout, cripple Jags' playoff hopes



Houston Texans running back Domanick Davis slips through the fingers of Jacksonville Jaguars defender Donovan Darius during the second quarter on Sunday.

By Mark Long
The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Jacksonville Jaguars spent the week talking about their huge win in Green Bay, getting to the playoffs and needing some help from Pittsburgh against Baltimore.

Maybe they should have focused more on Houston.

Domanick Davis ran for a career-high 150 yards and a touchdown and the Texans crippled Jacksonville's postseason hopes with a 21-0 victory Sunday.

Several Houston players said they felt slighted by the lack of attention from the Jags, and it gave a team with little to play for a reason to rally.

"They're sitting there worried about Baltimore and Pittsburgh. They should have been worried a little bit about us," Texans defensive end Gary Walker said.

The Jaguars looked nothing like a team with so much to play for in the final after upsetting the Packers and pulling even with Baltimore, Denver and Buffalo in the AFC wild-card race.

Jacksonville had some excuses, though. Running back Fred Taylor missed the game with a sprained knee, ending his streak of consecutive starts at 46 games, and quarterback Byron Leftwich sustained a mild concussion in the first quarter.

The shutout was the first in team history for Houston and marked the first time the Jaguars have been blanked since a 44-0 drubbing at Detroit on Dec. 17, 1995.

This one could be far more costly than that loss to the Lions in Jacksonville's inaugural season.

Because Baltimore lost at Pittsburgh, the Jaguars (8-7) could have taken control of the final AFC wild-card spot with a victory against Houston (7-8). Instead, they will need to win next week at Oakland and have the Ravens, Broncos and Bill lose to return to the postseason for the first time since 1999.

"I knew we had a good chance coming in here, but for some reason these guys don't respect us and they came out and played like it," Texans defensive tackle Seth Payne said after Houston held the Jaguars to a franchise-low 126 yards.

The Jags have no one to blame but themselves — because they did little on offense and couldn't stop Davis all afternoon.

"We just didn't show up," Pro Bowl defensive tackle Marcus Stroud said. "But maybe we can still slide into the playoffs."

Leftwich struggled from the start. He misfired on his first three passes and fumbled early. He picked up the loose ball and then took a shot to the head when sacked by Robaire Smith.

He missed a play before returning on the next series. But he wasn't the same. He overthrew receivers and looked lost in the pocket at times. Coach Jack Del Rio benched him with 4:04 to play, replacing him with David Garrard.

Leftwich finished 6-for-14 for 35 yards with an interception.

The Texans, meanwhile, moved the ball with ease. They finished with 333 yards, much of it thanks to Davis. His previous career high was 129 yards, set last season against the New York Jets and tied last month against Tennessee. Davis also caught five passes for 39 yards.

"You missed one tackle with that guy, and it was like he was out of the gate," Jags linebacker Mike Peterson said.

The Texans scored on the opening possession, a 65-yard drive capped by Davis' 1-yard run. They made it 14-0 in the second after Davis broke loose for a 44-yard gain and then Andre Johnson made a spinning 10-yard catch in the end zone.

They added a defensive score with 3:11 to play. Antwan Peek picked up a fumble and returned it 66 yards for his first career touchdown.

"This is one best defensive game we've had in our three-year history," coach Don Capers said. "It shows you the kind of pride and character they have."

White was one of NFL's greatest

BY CLIFF CHRISTL
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

There is no higher honor in professional football than induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. But there has been a small pantheon of players in the 85-year history of the NFL that has transcended even that special company. Reggie White was among them. He was one of the great of the great.

White, who died Sunday at age 43, played 15 years in the NFL, including six with the Green Bay Packers, and finished his career with 198 sacks, now second on the career list. He was elected to a record 13 straight Pro Bowls. He was twice the NFL's defensive player of the year.

He was selected to the NFL's all-decade teams for the 1980s and 1990s. And he was one of three defensive ends named to the league's 75th anniversary team in 1994, six years before he retired.

White is all but a cliché to be inducted into the Hall of Fame when he becomes eligible a year from now, if not before if the selection committee decides to waive its five-year waiting period.

The other defensive ends honored with White on the 75th anniversary team were David "Deacon" Jones and Gino Marchetti.

Willie Davis, one of 12 defensive ends in the Hall of Fame, played during the same period as Jones and Marchetti. As one of the great Packers of the Vince Lombardi era and a current member of the franchise's board of directors, Davis also closely followed White's career.

Davis categorized Jones and Marchetti as great pass rushers. To this day, Davis said Marchetti was the best he had ever seen at that aspect of the game. But Davis said he probably would rank White as the most complete defensive end of them all.

"Reggie could very well have been that one player," said Davis.

"His ability to play end with almost tackle skills and, ultimately, getting outside and playing as a typical defensive end would play it today; when you take those two things and hook them together, Reggie could very well be the guy."

Jones and Marchetti played before sacks were kept as an unofficial statistic. When White retired following the 2000 season, he held the record. Bruce Smith broke it last year, finishing his career with 200.

Smith played four more years than White. Jones, who played 14 seasons mostly with the Los Angeles Rams, said he'd rank himself No. 1, but that White might be next on his list.

"There are two ends on every team," said Jones. "We were the No. 1 and No. 2 choices on the all-time team. But I would never say anybody who ever played the position was better than me. You could hold me to a fire and I'd never say that."

After two seasons with the Memphis Showboats of the United States Football League, White signed with the Philadelphia Eagles on Sept. 20, 1985. He played in only 13 games that season but had an instant impact. He registered 13 sacks and was named the NFC's defensive rookie of the year.

In eight seasons with the Eagles, White totaled 124 sacks, an average of 15%. In the strike-shortened 1987 season, he recorded a league-high 21 sacks.

White played with the Packers from 1993-'98. He added

76½ sacks to his total and was the cornerstone of a defense that ranked No. 1 in the league when the Packers won Super Bowl XXXI.

White finished his career with the Carolina Panthers in 2000.

Jim Hanifan, offensive line coach of the St. Louis Rams, is in his 31st season in the NFL. Included was a stint as line coach of the Washington Redskins famed "Hogs," when White was playing for division rival Philadelphia.

No defensive end ever caused him more fits than White, Hanifan said.

"He was absolutely awesome," he said, "not only when he played defensive end, but when he was with Buddy [Ryan] and the Eagles, they'd line up with him over center. My gosh! We did everything we could think of to minimize the havoc he would cause. But he created that anyway. He could not only come off the edge with speed. But, oh my goodness, he came off with power."

In comparing White to other defensive ends over the past three decades, Hanifan made the same distinction as Davis when he compared White to the players of yester-

year. What separated White from the others was his ability to play the run and the pass.

"He was a very similar threat as Lawrence Taylor was at linebacker," Hanifan said. "The other guy I would put up in that top three would be Bruce Smith. But Bruce was going to go after that quarterback and you could run the ball there, at times. Reggie was solid, all the way around."

A case could even be made that White was more than just a great defensive end. Along with Taylor, he might also be on a short list of the greatest defensive players of the modern era.

"I'm going to use that Bum Phillips' line: I don't know if he's the best, but it wouldn't take time to call the roll," said Ron Wolf, who as general manager of the Packers brought White to Green Bay. "You're talking about defensive greats who ever played the game. He's right up there."

"Deion Sanders revolutionized the game. Ted Hendricks. They were great players. But [White] would be in that group."

Against the run, White not only possessed the strength and leverage to hold the point of attack, but he also had the instincts and quickness to squeeze gaps, and the speed to chase plays down from the backside.

His signature as a pass rusher was a combination of what they call in the business club, rip or hump moves. Essentially, White would charge up-field, catch the tackle shifting his weight, and sweep him aside if not completely knock him off his feet.

"He was tremendous. He had great strength. He had great speed," said Dale Hautp, a native of Manitowoc who served as White's defensive line coach for seven of his eight seasons in Philadelphia. "He'd set them up with [the club], fake with it, almost like a boxer. But he also could play off that. Fake the club and go back to the rip."

Bob Oates, a writer for the Los Angeles Times and the only charter member remaining on the Hall of Fame selection committee, said that the five-year rule had never been waived in the 41-year history of the voting.

Oates said that he expected someone on the committee to propose in the weeks ahead that an exception be made for White.

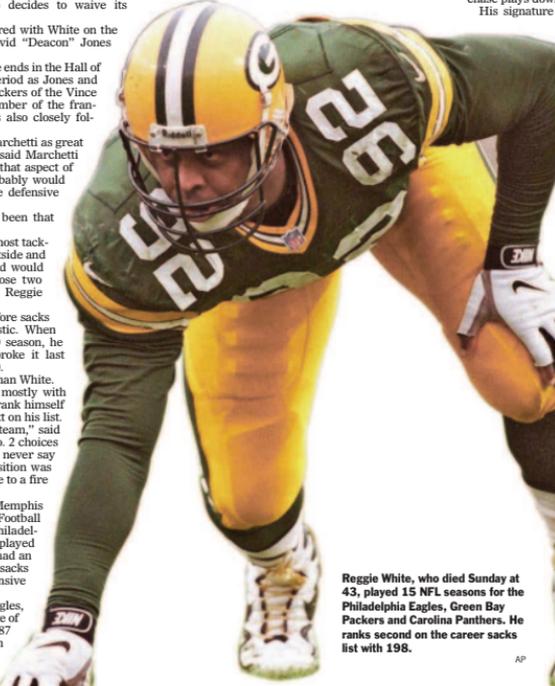
In 1973, voters conducted a special election and named Roberto Clemente to the Baseball Hall of Fame shortly after his death.

Clemente was killed in a plane crash three months after his final season with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

But Oates said he didn't believe a proposal to exempt White from the customary wait would pass.

"It's the first thing that occurs to you," said Oates. "My guess is that it would not stand much of a chance. The rules of the Hall of Fame people have put in have withstood many challenges and they've never changed anything."

But Oates said he was certain that White would be elected in February, 2005, at the latest, and take his rightful place among



Reggie White, who died Sunday at 43, played 15 NFL seasons for the Philadelphia Eagles, Green Bay Packers and Carolina Panthers. He ranks second on the career sacks list with 198.

the greats of the game

Football's reaction to Reggie White's death:

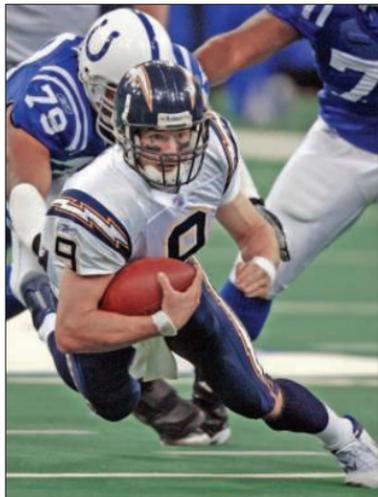
"Reggie White was a gentle warrior who will be remembered as one of the greatest defensive players in NFL history. Equally as impressive as his achievements on the field was the positive impact he made off the field. It may be the greatest positive influence on so many young people." — NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue.

"He was just a wonderful player, first of all. Then, as a person, he was just the best. He was one of the leaders, along with Brett Favre, of our football team in Green Bay. I'm a better person for having been around Reggie White." — Seattle Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren, who coached White at Green Bay.

"He was one of the greatest players who ever put on a uniform at his position. I once referred to him as the Tony Dorese of defensive linemen. There's never been a better one." — Johnny Majors, White's coach at Tennessee.

"Everyone thought the last place he would sign was Green Bay and it was monumental because not only did he sign but he recruited for Green Bay ... He sent a message to the rest of the NFL that Green Bay was a great place to play." — Green Bay President Bob Harlan. White was the first major black player to sign with the Packers as a free agent.

"At times, you would get a little frustrated with Reggie because he was always goofing around in the practice field. He goofed around all the time. He loved the game and rarely got serious. Now on Sundays, he'd get serious and he would have fun." — Tennessee Titans coach Jeff Fisher, who was with White for five seasons in Philadelphia.



San Diego Chargers quarterback Drew Brees is tackled by Indianapolis Colts defender Raheem Brock during the fourth quarter in Indianapolis on Sunday. The Colts defeated the Chargers 34-31 in overtime.

Manning: QB kept cool on game-tying drive

MANNING, FROM BACK PAGE

"We wanted to confuse him a little bit," linebacker Donnie Edwards said.

"But when we had to make plays, we came up short." The biggest play came on fourth-and-4 from the Indianapolis 25 with the Colts down 31-23 with 2:07 left in regulation. Manning waved off the punt team, then found Reggie Wayne for a game-saving 19-yard completion.

The Chargers were stunned. "He's the one who told the coach they were going for it," Edwards said. "It was pretty amazing because if we stopped them there, we pretty much win the game."

The Chargers could not recover, Manning hooked up with Dallas Clark twice, Harrison for 18 yards and the 21-yard line drive to a wide-open Stokley in the end zone — for the record-breaker.

"It was right on me, which is probably a good thing because if I had too much time to think about it, I probably would have dropped it," Stokley said.

But there was no time to dance as cameras flashed in the crowd. Instead, Manning quickly directed his teammates to the line, and handed off to James for the tying 2-point conversion.

San Diego didn't get another chance. After winning the coin toss to start overtime, Manning connected with Stokley on a 23-yard pass, then hit Reggie Wayne for a 35-yard catch and

run. James then ran to the middle of the field to set up Vanderjag's kick.

Besides Manning's record, the Colts became the first team with three receivers each with 1,000 yards and 10 TD receptions. No team has had three 1,000-yard receivers since the 1995 Atlanta Falcons.

San Diego also had record-breaking performances. Drew Brees' 4-yard shovel pass to Antonio Gates for a 24-9 lead early in the second half, was Gates' 13th TD of the season. That gave Gates the NFL mark for TD receptions by a tight end, breaking a tie with four other players. Brees was 21-for-31 for 290 yards and three touchdowns.

That broke the single-season record he shared with Dallas' Emmitt Smith and Kansas City's Priest Holmes. Washington's John Riggins and George Rogers both ran for touchdowns in 13 straight games, but they needed two seasons to do it.

"These awards are terrific on both sides," Chargers coach Marty Schottenheimer said. "But the bottom line is we want to win."

So did the Colts, especially Manning. "It was an individual thing," he said. "But the nice thing is, we kind of turned it into a team thing here."

Preliminary report says White died from lung ailment, other problems

The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — NFL great Reggie White may have died because of a respiratory disease combined with other health problems, a preliminary autopsy report said Monday.

White most likely had a condition that affected the amount of air his lungs could hold, resulting in "fatal cardiac arrhythmia," said Dr. Mike Sullivan, the medical examiner for Mecklenburg County and a forensic pathologist.

The report issued by Sullivan's

office also said sleep apnea may have been a factor.

The report is a preliminary one; determining a final cause of death could take up to three months, Sullivan's office said.

White died Sunday at Presbyterian Hospital in Huntersville after being taken there from his home in nearby Cornelius. His wife, Sara, called 911.

White had the disease, known as sarcoidosis, for several years, family spokesman Keith Johnson said Sunday. He described it as a respiratory ailment that affected his sleep.

On its Web site, the American Lung Association describes sarcoidosis as a disease characterized by the presence of small areas of inflamed cells that can attack any organ of the body but is most frequently found in the lungs.

The cause of the disease, which is most common among blacks and white northern Europeans, is not known.

Sleep apnea causes people to stop breathing repeatedly — in some cases, hundreds of times — during their sleep.

Panthers get within one win of playoffs after starting 1-7

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — The Carolina Panthers are one step closer to overcoming their horrendous start.

Jake Delhomme threw for 214 yards and four touchdowns Sunday, helping the defending NFC champions beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 37-20 and move within a victory of clinching a playoff berth.

The Panthers (7-7) won for the sixth time in seven games after a 1-7 start, and they can earn a wild-card spot by beating New Orleans at home next Sunday.

The Saints, also 7-8, stayed in the race by beating Atlanta 26-13, a victory that eliminated Tampa Bay from contention earlier in the day.

Four of the six games the Panthers and Bucs have played against each other since the NFC South was formed in 2002 have been decided by seven points or less, including a 21-14 Carolina victory on Nov. 28.

Delhomme threw TD passes of 15 and 6 yards to Mshin Muhammad and the Panthers blocked a punt to set up a field goal as the first half expired to build a 17-7 lead. Carolina marched 70 yards after the second half kickoff to go up 24-7 on Delhomme's 4-yard TD throw to Keary Colbert.

The Bucs (5-10) lost for the third straight time since routing the NFC South champion Falcons

27-0 in a game they hoped would be a springboard for a strong stretch run that would carry them to the playoffs after an 0-4 start.

Instead, Tampa Bay is assured its worst finish since 1996. A loss at Arizona in the season finale would give the Bucs 11 defeats for the first time since 1993.

Seahawks 24, Cardinals 21: At Seattle, Shaun Alexander rushed 30 times for 154 yards with three touchdowns and Darrell Jackson caught six passes for 101 yards as Seattle clinched a playoff berth.

The Seahawks (8-7) will clinch the NFC West if Philadelphia beats St. Louis on Monday night. It's the first time Seattle has made the playoffs in consecutive years since 1983-84.

Josh McCown threw a pair of 29-yard TD strikes to Larry Fitzgerald in the fourth quarter, putting the Cardinals (5-10) to 24-21 with 2:30 to play. He also found Fitzgerald for a score with 11:32 remaining.

Cowboys 13, Redskins 10: At Irving, Texas, Vinny Testaverde silenced the boos from fans who wanted him benched with a 39-yard touchdown to Patrick Crayton with 30 seconds left that gave the Dallas its fourth straight victory over Washington and 14th

in 15 games. Dallas (6-9) fell behind 10-6 with 6:44 left on a 5-yard touch-down pass from Patrick Ramsey to Robert Royal.

Testaverde hit Jason Witten for 14 yards and Richie Anderson for 7 more. Facing third-and-3, he threw deep to Crayton down the right sideline and the seventh-round pick caught it in stride for his first career touchdown. The Redskins are 5-10.

Dolphins 10, Browns 7: At Miami, Olinde Mare kicked a 51-yard field goal with 7 seconds left in the Dolphins' edgified Cleveland, prompting a big cheer from the 20,000 fans who remained until the finish.

Jim Bates won in the matchup of interim coaches against Terry Robiskie. Bates imposed 2-3 since Dave Wannstedt resigned, but he'll be replaced after the season by LSU coach Nick Saban, who accepted the Miami job Saturday.

The Dolphins (4-11) made it two wins in a row for the first time this season.

LeV Bruggs broke Jim Brown's 45-year-old Cleveland franchise record for carries with 38 for 143 yards, but the Browns (3-12) still sit eighth in the AFC East. Robiskie fell to 0-4 since replacing Butch Davis.

Sunday's NFL stars:



AP photo

Quarterbacks

► Peyton Manning, Colts, threw his 48th TD pass of the season to beat Dan Marino's 1984 record. Manning finished 27-for-44 for 383 yards and 2 TDs in the Colts' 41-10 victory over the San Diego Chargers.

Running backs

► Shaun Alexander, Seahawks, rushed 30 times for 154 yards as Seattle clinched a playoff berth with a 24-21 victory over the Arizona Cardinals.

► Donnell Davis, Texans, rushed for a career-high 150 yards and a touchdown as Houston crippled Jacksonville Jaguars' playoff hopes with a 21-0 victory.

Receivers

► Joey Galloway, Buccaneers, had nine receptions for 98 yards and a touchdown in a 27-20 loss to the Carolina Panthers.

was Galloway's 31st TD in the past four games.

► Brandon Stokley, Colts, caught Peyton Manning's record-breaking 49th TD pass on his seven receptions for 123 yards and a TD. Stokley TD also gave the Colts their first victory since 1950. He had 11 receptions for 150 yards and 1,000 yards apiece in the same game.

► Antonio Gates, Chargers, caught his 40th TD pass from Philip Rivers in a 34-10 record for a tight end in the Chargers' 33-10 loss to the Indianapolis Colts.

Defense

► The Houston Oilers kept their first shutout in franchise history in a 21-0 victory over the Tennessee Titans.

Special Teams

► Kelviaun Pruitt, Bengals, returned a punt 42 yards to set up Jon Kitna's 4-yard TD on the final play of the game. Pruitt had 44 seconds left as the Bengals rallied for a 23-21 victory over the New York Giants.

SPORTS



Steelers lock up first-round bye, home-field advantage with victory over Ravens, Page 33

Manning eclipses Marino

Colts QB's 49th TD pass of season breaks record that stood since '84

BY MICHAEL MAROT
The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Peyton Manning was too busy trying to beat the San Diego Chargers to celebrate his record-breaking touchdown pass.

The Indianapolis star broke Dan Marino's season record with 56 seconds left in regulation, hitting Brandon Stokley on a 21-yard post pattern, but still had a lot of work to do in the Colts' 34-31 overtime victory Sunday.

Edgerrin James ran for the tying 2-point conversion on a play Manning called at the line, and the Colts won on Mike Vanderjagt's 30-yard field goal on the first possession of overtime.

It was only then that Manning, finally, let go by pumping his fist in the air, giving high-fives to teammates and hugging six-time Pro Bowl receiver Marvin Harrison.

"At the time I threw it, there wasn't a lot of emotion for me, because if we don't get the 2-point conversion, this is a down locker room right now," Manning said. "The fact that it happened, we won the game... it sure made for an exciting day."

For three weeks, Manning downplayed the significance of Marino's record, football's equivalent of baseball's home-run mark, saying all he wanted to do was win.

In the closing minutes Sunday, Manning delivered.

Indianapolis (12-3) scored on its final two possessions to win its eighth straight and wrap up the No. 3 seed in the AFC playoffs.

"The way it happened on that drive, I think Johnny Unitas would have been proud," Manning said.

The AFC West champion Chargers (11-4) tried to prevent the high-scoring Colts from torching their poor pass defense. They



Indianapolis Colts fans celebrate after quarterback Peyton Manning threw his 49th touchdown of the season, breaking the record held by Dan Marino, in the fourth quarter against the San Diego Chargers in Indianapolis on Sunday.

blitzed, used extra defensive backs and changed their looks to confuse Manning.

It worked effectively for three quarters.

Manning, who had been sacked just nine times in the first 14 games, went down four times against the Chargers. He fumbled twice, threw an interception and appeared to be pressing as he overthrew receivers, mistimed throws and ran out of trouble.

Then he reverted to his usual form, finishing 27-for-44 for 383 yards and the TDs. He has 49 touchdown passes this season, one more than Marino had in 1984, and remained on pace to shatter Steve Young's NFL record for passer rating next week in Denver. Manning is at 121.4, Young finished at 112.8 in 1994.

SEE MANNING ON PAGE 35



Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning led his team to a 34-31 overtime victory over the San Diego Chargers and broke a record that many thought could not be broken. He's still on pace to shatter Steve Young's NFL record for season passer rating (112.8) next week in Denver.

White's legacy as one of NFL's greatest DEs, pass rushers sure to earn him posthumous trip to NFL Hall

Page 34



Patriots rebound from last week's upset at Miami, secure first-round playoff bye with victory over Jets

Page 31

Nash sets assist record in Suns' win vs. Raptors Page 29

